MANZONI

THE SACRED HYMNS

(Gl' Inni Sacri)

AND THE

NAPOLEONIC ODE

(Il Cinque Maggio)

To my dear son
Theo. A. Bingham
with the love of his father
A. T. B.

Hartford Conn
October 1904.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI
(The Tragedy of Pellico translated in English verse)

THE TWIN SISTERS OF MARTIGNY
(A Novel of Italian Life)

THE BONANZA OF CANOVA
(A Story of Italian Art)

GEMME DELLA LETTERATURA ITALIANA
(A bird's-eye view written in Italian of Italian Letters)

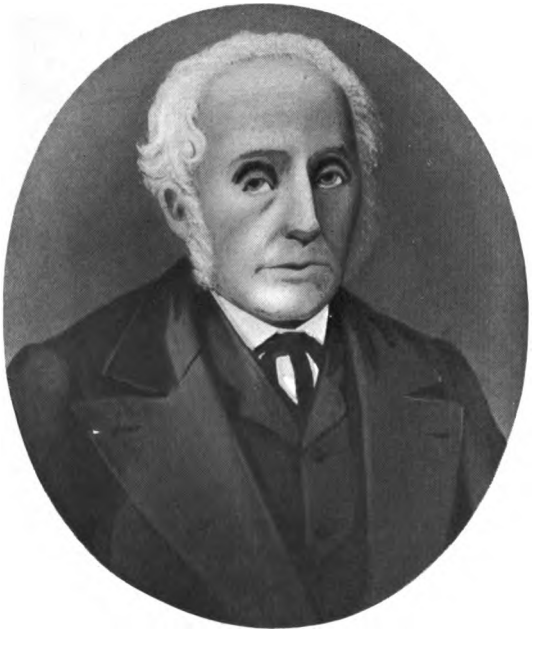
THE SACRED HYMNS

[*Gl' Inni Sacri*]

AND

THE NAPOLEONIC ODE

[*Il Cinque Maggio*]



ALEXANDER MANZONI

AT THE AGE OF FIFTY-FIVE
WHEN HE SENT OUT THE DEFINITIVE EDITION OF HIS GREAT WORKS

[ITALIAN GEMS I.]

THE SACRED HYMNS

[*Gl' Inni Sacri*]

AND

THE NAPOLEONIC ODE

[*Il Cinque Maggio*]

OF

ALEXANDER MANZONI

Translated in English Rhyme

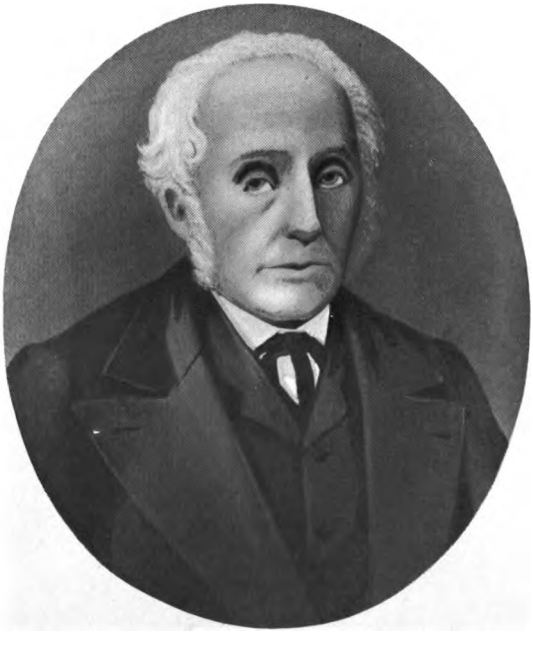
WITH PORTRAIT,
BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE, HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS,
CRITICAL NOTES
AND
APPENDIX CONTAINING THE ITALIAN TEXTS

BY

THE REV. JOEL FOOTE BINGHAM, D.D., L.H.D.

HENRY FROWDE
LONDON, EDINBURGH, GLASGOW
NEW YORK AND TORONTO

1904



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THE NAPOLEONIC ODE

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In the succeeding translations I have aimed at the following points: First of all and above all, to give the exact sense of the author down to the finest shade of meaning, to the utmost degree that lay in my power in the use of our tongue. With so subtle a thinker, so condensed and epigrammatic a writer, so daring and self-confident a poet as ALEXANDER MANZONI, perhaps it has not lain within the limits at once of my capacity and the permissible license of English verse to accomplish this in every instance with such absolute perfection that no *italianista* shall think he can see something of the Poet's thought in the original which he does not discover in the

translation; but it has been my endeavor to leave out of the English line no shade of MANZONI's meaning and still less to pad in any of my own even where, as not often has happened, a paraphrase seemed necessary.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI has said very neatly, expressing very exactly my thought and my endeavor: "The life-blood of rhythmical translation is this commandment,—that a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one. The only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be to endow a fresh nation, as far as possible, with one more possession of beauty. Poetry not being an exact science, literality of rendering is secondary to this chief law. I say *literality*,—not fidelity, which is by no means the same thing.

When literality can be combined with what is thus the primary condition of success, the translator is fortunate and must strive his utmost to unite them; when such object can only be attained by paraphrase, that is his only path[1]."

But beyond giving undiminished and unenlarged the thought of the Poet which must, in my plan, at all hazards be preserved to the last possible degree of exactness; beyond preserving always the rhetorical figure chosen by the Poet to illustrate or enliven his thought, which must in no instance be permitted to disappear; still in the invincible unacceptability to the English ear of a metrical imitation (however symmetrical and pleasing it may look to the eye), of MANZONI's varying and even in his

[1]Preface to *The Early Italian Poets*, 1861.

own tongue extraordinary, though sweet and flowing metres, with lines rhymed and unrhymed intermixed, I have endeavored to preserve a shadow at least of the form and an echo always of the sense in not unmusical English numbers. So that the general reader may rest assured that the sense of MANZONI's thought is here, however to the expert Italian ear may seem to have evaporated in my hands something of the great Poet's untranslatable melody.

The number of verses in the several stanzas, though a matter, I suppose, of no great importance, is in fact the same as in the original or varies from it but seldom.

I should have wished not to load the text with figures of reference. But the reader must bear in mind that the Poems

in the original are of great lyric condensation and often (specially in the *Cinque Maggio*), of Pindaric abruptness and of a rhetorical splendor in allusions and figures of speech which, though apposite and effective in the highest degree, are not always readily caught by the reader at first sight in their full force. So much so have the Italians felt it to be, that their men of letters have built up around these Poems a literature of exposition and criticism, of comment and disagreement which is of great bulk and sometimes more bewildering than the text itself. Such of this and as much of my own judgments as seemed to me likely to be useful whether for an illuminated apprehension of the finer subtleties of the thoughts, or for the easier, or more

adequate enjoyment of the Poet's art, I have endeavored to bring out in the appended notes while making them neither burdensomely full nor provokingly scanty[1].

In the multitude of changes and errors that have crept into the text of these Poems in the legion of unauthorized editions, I hope it will prove a satisfaction to such as have more or less knowledge of the language of the Poet, to find printed in an appendix the original text according to the Poet's own edition *de luxe* of 1840.

J. F. B.

HARTFORD, CONN.,
August, 1904.

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[1]For much more of such illustrative and critical matter see my *Gemme Della Letteratura Italiana:* Firenze Barbèra: Londra, Frowde, 1904.

BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE

BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE

To enjoy, to understand the work of ALEXANDER MANZONI, of all other men, one needs particularly a certain definite conception of his unique personality as well as of the environment, domestic, political, literary, in the midst of which he moved and wrought. For in fact in the production of that extraordinary man who stands in the glory of Italian letters next after DANTE ALIGHIERI, appeared in a degree hard to parallel the united results of heredity, of education, of social, political, domestic conditions, underlaid certainly in magnificent measure, by that individual, inscrutable, native quality, "that divine spark independent of accidental circumstances," which in want of a more definitely descriptive name we call genius. Never were these causes, external and internal, more clearly marked, and never have they operated elsewhere more fully

and powerfully, than in giving a Manzonian character and color to whatever followed the ceaseless activity of that inimitable pen.

"Great as a poet, equally great as a prose-writer, in thought, in feeling, in a sculpturesque style, he marked out deeply a new path in every kind of literature, historical, critical, philosophical, philological. His lyric poetry, his tragedies (in which he initiated reforms which are to-day the hinge of the modern drama), and the wonderful romance, *I Promessi Sposi* (a book of universal genius and unlimited learning), are monuments from which issue beams of light that penetrate every mind and every heart."[1]

The dignity of real aristocracy; the ever-present sentiment of independence coming down for a thousand years in the stock of rural nobility; unbending patriotism boiling in blood derived from ancestral veins a hundred times pierced in battles for freedom; the solidity of profound learning; acuteness developed in wrestling with

[1] F. Orlando.

the subtleties of the various philosophies; literary polish from association with Parisian letters and society; the perfected *technique* of every form and every school of poetry; unbounded inspirations of nature received in elegant country life; the genial politeness of a gentleman of the world; the amenities of sincere and intimate friendships; the tenderness of devoted family life; over all the invincible charity and optimism of the ardent Christian believer; and finally, a never satisfied industry of the file and a self-depreciating criticism—all these foundations and forces wrought mightily together and resulted in building that beautiful greatness which has made the name of ALEXANDER MANZONI, after that of DANTE ALIGHIERI, the most brilliant star in the galaxy of Italian letters.

The ancient noble family of MANZONI had for centuries been prominent in upper Lombardy. In 1710 they descended into the neighborhood of Lecco, on the margin of Lake Como, and established themselves in one of their ancient palatial

villas called *Caleotto.* They had also a town-house in Milan, where the father of the Poet, DON PIETRO MANZONI, met and won the hand of JULIA, a famed belle of that capital, a grand-daughter of the Marquis GIAN SAVERIO (whose wife was a VISCONTI DA RHO), and the accomplished eldest daughter of CESARE BECCARIA, at that time the most illustrious literary character in Italy, author of the immortal treatise *Of Crimes and their Punishments.*[1] The daughter added to her dowry not only her bodily charms, but the intellect of her family and the accomplishments of the highest social culture of the times.

The first ten years of the married life of PIETRO and JULIA MANZONI were passed together at *Caleotto,* their palatial villa, amidst the enchanting environment of those Piedmontese lakes and mountains, during the summer and autumn, while in winter they came to their city-home to

[1] *Dei Delitti e delle Pene.* "One of the most effectively useful books that have ever been written, an honor to Italian thought and of which it may be said, as of the writings of MACHIAVELLI and of GALILEO, that it does honor to the Italian speech."—A. D'ANCONA.

participate in the gaieties of the capital. Here on the 7th of March 1785, at No. 20 Via San Damiano, ALEXANDER MANZONI was born.

His infancy, and this only, was passed amidst the endearments of home; if we may call it so to be nursed and brought up as he was in a hamlet, three or four miles away, called *La Costa* [The Knoll], where no doubt he was often visited by his gay young mother. In his sixth year the little boy was sent to begin his studies in a college of Somaschi friars at Merate a few miles further along the shore of Lake Como. His childhood never again had the solace of family life.

Five years later, after the poorest of instruction there and having made little progress in learning he was passed on to another college of the Somaschi at Lugano. Not unlike his great contemporary, Sir Walter in the north, during those early years he was unsympathetic with the careless, stupid masters, and was rated among the bashful, stammering, contemplative dunces of the school. Here at Lugano he remained two years,

finding happily one sympathetic master, FRANCESCO SOAVE, who was the first to discover the rare capacity of his precocious pupil.

He was next transferred, being now thirteen, to the college Longone, called then Nobles' College [*Collegio de' Nobili*] belonging to the Barnabite fathers, in Milan, but at the time, under stress of political affairs, holding its sessions at Castellazzo dei Barzi, a villa belonging to the College, near Magenta. While here at Longone, before completing his fifteenth year, already familiar with the classic verse of PARINI, his first master whom he used to call the Divine, the grandson of CESARE BECCARIA, having just finished reading the *Bassvilliana* of VINCENZO MONTI of which he was still aflame, was presented to this great Poet then at the height of his powers and his fame. MONTI, 26 years his senior, was charmed with the precocious youth[1] and the neophyte returned the sentiment by an admiration little short of adoration.

[1]Already at fifteen, not to speak of translations from Virgil and Horace and minor things, the author of an epic poem of four cantos in the triple rhyme of Dante's Comedy entitled The Triumph of Liberty [*Il Trionfo della Libertà*] published 75 years later among his *postuma*.

Leaving, soon after, this College-villa, he made a short stay in the home of two maiden aunts, one of them an ex-nun, who were living in the suburbs of Milan. From there he passed to a residence at the University of Pavia. After less than two years of university life and without taking any degree, at the age of sixteen, he returned permanently to Milan, finishing thus his public studies except attending noted lectures of PIETRO SIGNOVELLI on dramatic poetry at *Brera*, the Jesuit college at Milan.

During the next five years which included a visit of some months in Venice, he lived in the house of his father in Milan and for a time was an *habitué* of the *ridotto* [theater-parlor] *della Scala* where he spent much time in gaming. One evening he was surprised there by MONTI the demi-god of his imagination when at college. The Poet who admired his genius approached and said to him: "If you go on in this way, fine verses we shall make in the future."[1] The young

[1] "*Se andate avanti così, bei versi che faremo in avenire.*"

man was startled, the Lombardian mettle of his ancestry flashed into an Alfierian resolve, he renounced gaming at once and forever. From now on his devotion to private study (like that of the youthful MILTON almost 200 years before in the seclusion of his father's house in the suburbs of London), became intense and his acquisitions, like those of his English prototype, prodigious, sweeping through the whole field of Latin and Italian authors. During this period he produced much various poetry never printed by him, but published years after his death, in it, though *juvenilia*, were found intrinsic values beyond the mere curiosity of *postuma* of so renowned a name.

The home, however, had been desolated by the departure of the wife and mother, even since the time of the first sending away of the child to the college of the Somaschi friars; which act probably was a result of that breach. It is certain that a legal separation of the parents had been executed and the mother ever afterward wrote her name JULIA BECCARIA. In connection with some

confusion and uncertainties it is known that she went immediately to live on terms of intimate domesticity with Count CARLO IMBONATI, in Paris. It has been claimed that he was a distant relation. It is certain that he was a neighbor of the MANZONI in Milan, a man of literary tastes, an unbounded admirer of the accomplished Signora, often or always present at her social functions, about fifty years of age and in delicate health. The intimacy continued unbroken till his death some fifteen years later. By his will she inherited, after some legacies, his entire estate. Her conduct caused great contemporary scandal; and the child never met IMBONATI in life, seeing his body for the first time when assisting the stricken mother in transporting it to Milan for burial, being then in his twentieth year.

If not a justification of the conduct of the wife and mother, there is to be noted as a certain palliation in the eyes of the world, the necessary incompatibility in taste and temper between a

proud, untamed, domineering lord from the Lombard mountains, already nearly sixty years old, and a delicate, vain, indulged young beauty, of princely stock, daughter of a marquis who was also the most illustrious *savant* of his time, herself one of the most intellectual and accomplished ladies in the upper society of the world. Receiving, also, naturally, distinguishing attentions on every side in the highest circles of culture and of fashion, which her husband, if less civilized not less haughty, would not easily brook, the inevitable and unbearable bitterness and battles in the household are easy to be imagined.

Then, when she fled from husband and child, it was to the sympathetic home of 'cousin' Carlo (at how many removes I do not know), but who was able and desirous to provide her with every physical comfort and every intellectual and social advantage; with a home where she would be a prized accession to his solitude; and where there never need be, as there never was any just ground for, a suspicion of scandal over their pure

and dignified personal relations. Nevertheless, there was mystery and there was suspicion of evil.

One thing more must be noted, namely, that the affections of the son, though so widely and so long separated from her, were drawn out more obviously, at least, toward the mother, than toward the father, who as is assumed, cared for his childhood and in whose house he found the home of his adolescence. While there is no ground for supposing any degree of infidelity toward the latter, it is certain that he adored the former; and there is no evidence that he faulted her doings whether in regard to himself or to any other.

After the death of IMBONATI, whom he assisted his mother to bury at *Brusuglio*, one of the Imbonati villas three miles out from Milan, the good son, in gentle sympathy for her sorrow, returned with her to Paris and for her solacement wrote and published at Paris a memorial poem unrhymed of 250 lines [*To Julia Beccaria on the Death of Carlo Imbonati*] in which with great

sweetness of affection, nobility of sentiment, purity and beauty of language and an ingenious novelty of ideas, the young poet built a veiled but effective and immortal monument to the high character of her friend, where occur such lines as:

Eager as he who seeks a treasure-trove,
Am I to speak the virtues out to thee
Whose temple was the chaste and guileless breast
Of him thou weepest.

It does not appear in the editions of his poems published by himself for reasons possibly other than literary; but it has not gone without notice and esteem among the great critics, of whom FOSCOLO in particular has praised and cited it in a note to his own famous *Sepulchres.*

His life in the wonderful *salons* of Paris into which his brilliant mother introduced him were an inestimable advantage to young MANZONI in a literary point of view, revealing and opening to him a new and inspiring intellectual world. At the *Maisonette*, the parlors of the widow Condorcet and in *Auteuil*, those of Madame Cabanis, the

shy and lymphatic but intensely impressible youth was brought into effective contact with the most cultivated and most interesting men of the century. The dearest, closest, most helpful friend of his whole life, the not anti-religious, intensely philitalian and enormously learned CLAUDE CHARLES FAURIEL he found there; but he found there also an elect crowd of eminent and brilliant disciples of VOLTAIRE among whom his mother, 'on whose head had long ago been laid the hands of the Patriarch of Fernay,' found her congenial place; poets, like PONCE DENIS LEBRUN, the French Pindar, whose thrilling and lofty lyrics of patriotism offered to condone for low and selfish ideas of honor; philosophers, like COUNT DE VOLNEY whose learning and brightness made his atheism almost tolerable; the great jacobite GARAT, elegant and eloquent defender and promoter of Robespierre; the 'sensual' philosophers, CABANIS, DESTUTT DE TRACY, MAINE DE BIRAU and a multitude of lesser stars, but still vigorous, acute, plausible

promulgators of those various philosophies, all fundamentally irreligious, which at that period were absorbing the attention of every mind and bearing along even the calmest thinkers in their impetuous currents.

While the ideas of the philosophers astonished him in their novelty and aroused him by their boldness; and the example of the labors and the successes of the reigning poets filled him with admiration; and all taken together was a needed and an effective spur for redoubling his ardor in the study of the great writers and in the cultivation especially of poetry; yet the subtle philosophy, superficially infidel and profoundly sensual, of these learned men was not and could not be doing otherwise than infiltrating their carnal scepticism into the ideas and opinions of the now swiftly developing youth and extinguishing in his impressive soul the light of Christian faith.

Two years later, residing still with his mother in Paris but having come to Genoa on an errand

of business and being at the moment visiting in Turin, he heard of the mortal illness of his father and flew to his bedside in Milan, arriving however too late to receive the dying octogenarian's latest breath. By this occurrence, on the 17th of March, 1807, being now just past twenty-two, he came into the possession of his patrimony; and by business relative to this was detained in Milan a part of the ensuing summer. The Imbonati town-house had been sold three years before to a Protestant banker from Geneva of the name of Blondel, whose eldest daughter, HENRIETTA [Enrichetta Luigia] then twelve years old, had caught the eye of the young Lombard nobleman.

New proximity and leisure caused the acquaintance to be renewed and before this visit was over, she now in her sixteenth year became his *promessa sposa.*[1]

He was now in circumstances open to settling in life and his disposition and temperament were very much so disposed. He had had while in

[1] September, 1807.

his teens two serious love affairs, both rather intense but both innocent and abortive; one with a Genoese older than he, to whom under the name of 'Angelic Lucy' he wrote verses, which was broken off by the influence of his family; the other with a Venetian girl, during the brief visit of the just enfranchised collegian to the seductive city of the isles. This time the lady was unsympathetic, treated the beardless poet as a boy and sent him home to his studies.

During the year following the death of his father he consummated his union[1] with the beautiful and lovely girl who became truly his 'Angelic Lucy', the supreme comfort of his existence, the wise mother of his many children, the safe counselor and supporting companion in the trying crises of his later life. The Catholic clergy having refused 'the marriage in church' to a Protestant, the nuptials were blessed at the house of the father of the bride (once the Imbonati town-house) by the then young Protes-

[1] February 6, 1808.

tant pastor, afterward famous professor, JOHN KASPER ORELLI. The new husband almost immediately conducted his girl-wife to the home of his mother in Paris, who warmly welcomed her new daughter; and from that day on the two ladies lived their happy lives lovingly together under the same roof, in the midst of an ever-growing flock of little ones.[1]

During the years that intervened between his leaving the colleges of the Somaschi friars and of the Barnabites, where the education, however imperfect otherwise, was profoundly religious, the solitary and desultory life of the young poet in Milan had relapsed into a careless worldliness and disregard of religious duties. Still further, under the influence of that three years of Parisian life and association, even that indifference was left behind. The foundations of faith in his soul were shaken. The structure of Christian belief which his whole previous education had aimed at rearing was tottering to its fall.

[1] The children by this lady were nine. all of whom lived to maturity.

In such a state of mind in which religion of any creed is held in slight esteem, he was the more ready to take a Protestant wife and in the Protestant fashion, yet most happily in her, who in his own words,[1] "together with the affections of wife and the wisdom of mother preserved a virgin soul," he found a moral force and a religious result which he least of all expected. The serious conversation and pure and earnest life of this most lovely woman respect and love of whom was ever more and still more absorbing the profoundest sentiments of his soul, struck a note within him which sounded in painful dissonance with the tones of unbelieving mockery in which their Parisian life was drowned. His mind became ill at rest in indifference, much less in unbelief. This uneasiness was steadily increased, also, by the conversation of two devoted priests,[2]

[1] In his dedication to her of the *Adelchi;* in which tragedy, in the character of the heroine, ERMENGARDA, [rejected wife of Charlemagne] drawing inspiration from his own most lovely and virtuous HENRIETTA, he has produced one of the most powerful and artistic figures anywhere to be found in the poetry or literature of the world.

[2] The abbot Eustachio Degola of Genoa and Henri Gregoire a Frenchman.

who often visited the young couple and believed that the careless life of the husband operated to restrain the wife—a thing, not only, which they, naturally, so much deplored, but which appealed to the judgment and fine sensibility of the husband; and he became much disturbed over it, though the bonds of incredulity[1] were very unyielding in his tough Lombard constitution; and literary and fashionable popularity bore upon him there with a tide which it was, perhaps, harder yet for him to stem.

Meanwhile the wife was not at ease in her thoughts. She listened gladly to the instructive conversations of the clerical friends at once respectful, gentle and persuasive. What conversations on the subject she may have ventured with her apparently careless husband, if any, we can-

[1] In 1806 he wrote from Paris to his friend PAGANI: 'I prefer the natural indifference of the French who leave you to go about your own business, to the cruel zeal of our people who take possession of you and wish to care for your soul and to drive into your body their own manner of thinking; as if one who has a head, a heart, two legs, and a stomach, and walks alone, could not dispose of himself, and of all that is in him, at his own pleasure.'

not know. But the step for her had difficulties, required renunciations external and internal and the unused months passed by.

However there came a day that brought with it a crisis for her. She became suddenly conscious that an event[1] in the history of her life was approaching which could neither be evaded nor postponed. Yet according to the teaching of the Church of her companion, according to his own professed belief so far as he had any, and that of the people great and small by whom she was surrounded, he was not a husband. How could she bear to bring into the world a doubtful child? And what if she should not survive the event? What a name she would carry down, what an indelible spot she would leave on the fame and fortune of the life innocent of her fault!

Besides, earnest and devout that she was in the religion according to which she had been trained and finding in the new faith no impedi-

[1]Compare stanza viii of *The Pentecost*.

ment but rather ample scope and every encouragement for the exercise of all the sentiments and virtues of holy living, the differences of creed and the language of worship,—great and tremendous as they indeed seemed to her when standing on the printed page, or even when falling from the lips of their clergy-friends, yet being in their nature mysterious and uncertain,[1] —these differences seemed to her to be things, after all, not greatly to concern the spiritual trust, love and obedience of her humble woman-heart yearning toward her Savior-God and striving honestly to fulfil the duties of her lot. Among these reflections, especially were ringing in her soul the words of the Apostle: "*What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?*"[2]

Finally, no little thing was the helpfulness she found in the churches themselves, the glorious temples of the Faith—a visit to which in their

[1] E. g. The solemnity of the Mass; the *status* of the Blessed Virgin; the infallibility of the Pope; the Immaculate Conception; the continuance of miracles; the authority of tradition; etc., etc.

[2] I Cor. vii, 16.

awful beauty and soft, sweet, peaceful solemnity, was itself an inspiration, an elevation, a strong solace—not to speak of the heavenly, soul-stirring music when the rites were progressing. This and much more in comparison with the bareness of the Protestant sanctuaries, the slender externals of worship and indeed the infrequency of functions there—standing feeble to comfort and sustain the hungering and thirsting and desponding soul in combat with the noise and vanity and folly which fill the days in the world outside. The apparent Protestant deficiency could be rebutted, it could, no doubt, be explained away, but all the same the comparison remained a mighty conscious gain on the one hand and on the other a mighty loss in the very quarter where she needed her strongest consolations.

Still the anxious months moved on, a daughter was born to them,[1] and remained unchurched, unbaptized. Meantime the *status* of the mother and child and the visibly prayful life of the

[1] JULIA, b. Dec., 1808, m. MASSIMO D'AZEGLIO, 1831, d. 1834.

former ever more and still more agitated the thoughts of the apparently careless husband and father. It was in these circumstances that sauntering one day through the streets of Paris without aim and with mind greatly disturbed by reflections on this subject he was seized by a sudden illness. The feeling was new, strange, alarming. Finding himself at its door, he stepped into the church of *St. Roch*, for rest and quiet. No sooner had he passed through the portal, as he himself afterward narrated to a friend,[1] than he was profoundly impressed by the atmosphere of devotion that surrounded him. Solemn recollections of the long neglected temple came over him and he felt an irresistible 'desire to pray and to believe.' He advanced to the high altar and kneeled there to pray, for the first time in many years. In a spasm of distress he cried out in his soul: "O God, if Thou hast an existence, reveal Thyself to me!" This petition he repeated over and over uncounted times, during

[1] GIACOMO ZANELLA.

the long space (he knew not how long), that he remained kneeling there. When at last he rose from his bewilderment and left the church, his mind was at rest, the faith of his childhood was reëstablished; he returned home with a soul full of peace;[1] new resolutions for life were settled; most surprising to him of all, he returned to find the partner of his existence more than ready to join him in the new departure and to meet the utmost of his wishes which till now he had hesitated to propose.

At last arrived for them the most momentous day in all their henceforth perfectly united and most happy lives. On the 15th of February, 1810 (the 3d anniversary of the Protestant nuptials), in the private chapel of the minister of foreign affairs of the then Kingdom of Italy[2] resident at Paris, with most solemn ceremony, abjuring the Protestant religion, HENRIETTA was received into the bosom of the Catholic Church; and on her head were laid the hands of the Archbishop of

[1] Compare stanza x of *The Pentecost.*
[2] Regno Italico.

Paris. This solemn rite was followed by another which in her heart of hearts was, perhaps, of livelier interest still. On the same day, at the same chancel, with the Catholic rite (the Sacrament as they now accepted it) of Matrimony, the two were sealed into a legitimate and indelible union by the sacred benediction of the Church, performed by the rector of the parish of the *Madeleine.*

Three months later, May 22d, 1810, their first-born, now seventeen months unchristianized, was baptized with the name JULIA CLAUDIA in the arms of CLAUDE CHARLES FAURIEL, their great friend, already illustrious for his immortal books, an intense lover of Italian letters, later professor at the *Sorbonne*, bound to the rising poet of Italy in a fraternal intimacy which neither distance nor time, but death alone could dissolve, more than forty years then in the future.[1]

[1] FAURIEL paid MANZONI a long visit, remaining in Italy from October, 1823, till November, 1825, during which he assisted the author who was then meditating *I Promessi Sposi.*

The reconsecration of the married pair into a new spiritual union in the same cherished faith, in which as years went on child after child a numerous flock came to be baptized, proved a supreme mutual joy and to the Poet with his peculiarly domestic temperament a very real element of strength as he matured in literary perfection and intellectual power. But in his case, also, as so often happens in a world of misunderstandings, injustice and conflict, the great happiness that flowed into his household and into his own heart from obedience to the dictates at once of his conscience and his affections cost him a great price.

On the material side, the conversion of the wife ruptured the friendly relations with her Protestant kindred. The husband was bitterly accused of influencing her conduct by means and motives which were tantamount to forcing her into the Catholic communion. The result of the paternal rage appears to have been a diminution, if not the entire loss of her dowry; which again seems

to have been one of several unfortunate factors in bringing on later a financial stringency in the domestic affairs of the Poet, which necessitated parting with his dearly loved *Caleotto* and grew at last into an anxiety and distress that appealed to the generosity of his sovereign and of his fellow-countrymen.

On the intellectual side, also, the accruing deprivation was painful and mortifying but it may probably be said that *this* was a loss which proved to be for him a gain to lose. The *salons* which had been a quickening center of his intellectual life and an ever-springing source of new literary inspirations, now and henceforth were no longer congenial to his heart nor invigorating to his intellect. On the contrary, the atmosphere which prevailed there, of classic mythology, of unclean sensuality, of revolutionary and murderous jacobinism, now that he had come to the light of a lofty faith, the sentiments of a pure spirituality, and the peaceful environment of a gentle and generous Christian life, was to him painful, deadening, intolerable.

Nor were these revulsions wholly on his part. With the change in his sentiments and especially with his public ecclesiastical acts the manner of his reception at the *salons* was altered. By some he was bitterly blamed, by some courteously avoided, by some treated with officious contempt, by too few by unchanged and generous behavior. As a result, in great measure, of this state of things, two months after the baptism of his child, he gladly returned (and now permanently) to Milan. Four years later (1814), he bought the modest house (still preserved as a museum), at the corner of Via Morone, No. 1, and the Piazza Belgiojoso, No. 3,[1] where, in alternation with his Imbonati suburban villa of *Brusuglio*, he ever afterwards resided.[2]

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[1] Confusion has arisen in connection with these numbers. The Manzoni home is a corner house and has two entrances, one in Via Morone bearing the number 1, the other in Piazza Belgiojoso bearing the number 3. The latter entrance was made by MANZONI in 1862 (but never used by him), because this side of the house had been rented for a Bank. MANZONI always entered by the Morone street door; yet the commemorative tablet has been put (I know not why), on the door of No. 3, which may have led some to believe, erroneously, that this was the door used by MANZONI.

[2] In 1819, in search of relaxation and health, and now taking with him his whole family (there were then five children), MANZONI revisited Paris and his friend FAURIEL, remaining there, but without

The date of this permanent return to Milan the Poet always regarded as the most interesting and important epoch, the dividing of ways, in his whole literary career. It was nothing less than his abandonment of the "horizons of pagan mythology" for the fields of Christian ethics, a conversion from "classicism" to "romanticism" so-called, in which he was to be in Italy the unrivaled exponent and master.[1] Like ST. PAUL on the plains of Damascus, he was arrested by a heavenly light in the heathen *salons* of Paris, and being "not disobedient to the heavenly vision," became the mighty apostle and leader in developing among his fellow countrymen the new doctrines which were already faintly rising like a new dawn over the German horizon and beginning to glimmer in northern Italy.

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physical benefit, about 10 months. In 1827, he visited Florence with his whole family, including, then, mother, wife, 7 children, and servants, a company of 15 souls, arriving there at the end of August and returning early in October. A principal reason of this visit was the promotion of his knowledge and practice of the Tuscan dialect by oral intercourse with his illustrious friends CAPPONI, NICOLINI, LEOPARDI and a score more of distinguished *habitués* of the Library Vieusseux where he was always welcomed with joy and reverence. Of this visit he humorously said that he "came there to rinse his rags in the water of the Arno." Another considerable visit to Tuscany was made in 1856, and a few shorter ones later.

[1]Compare INTRODUCTION TO THE SACRED HYMNS, page 58, note [1].

The gods and goddesses, the myths and legends, the whole artificial workmanship of classic antiquity and especially the sterile and feeble modern imitation of it, in misconceived and misapplied 'regularities' and rules,[1] to the domination of which genius in France had been for ages and was still in bondage, MANZONI abandoned once and forever on the day when he abandoned, from a disgust at once religious, literary and civic, those sensuous heathen *salons*. He once and but once had on his soul the mythologic sin of creating *Urania;* but it was the work of still earlier years and it was never repeated. "Strong in Latin and in Italian studies, with his god-like intellect, he went on steadily giving out such products in lyrics, in tragedy, in romance, that he was himself taken up among the greater gods in literature. It was no history of Coelum, of Saturn, of Jove; it was a crowding together of the Immortals themselves to make room for him in the sky."[2]

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[1] See the *Letters of* MANZONI *to Fauriel*, and to *Sainte-Beuve*, passim.
[2] CAMERINI.

For more than sixty years that plain, almost dilapidated dwelling at "No. 3," and the lovely country-seat of *Brusuglio*, constituted the world-renowed home of modest content, peace, and domestic joy and a meeting-place of high-toned intellect never before equaled in Italy; whence issued into the sight of his admiring countrymen a slow but steady stream of learned and judicious treatises, of poetry for naturalness and perfection unmatched, and above all, that world-startling romance which has no other companion in the literature of Italy than the masterpiece of DANTE ALIGHIERI.

With other heredities so obvious and so strong, curious, indeed, was the absence in him of the historic violent, choleric character of his ancestors.[1] The temper of ALEXANDER MANZONI on

[1] The ancient feudal family bore an historic character in Lombardy quite the opposite of subserviency to superiors, or of gentleness to inferiors. A significant couplet, it is traditionary, used to be heard echoing among those Alpine valleys:

"Poverna's torrent in winter season,
And the Manzoni know not reason."

the contrary, was mild and generous to a degree. So much so that he shunned contentions of every sort and in important instances yielded to wrong rather than enforce his rights in the courts. Notably among other instances, when his masterpiece was plagiarized in the illustrated edition of 1840, and his loss on this account exceeded 40,000 lire, he bore it quietly without bringing suit. Absorbed in his intellectual labor and study, his affairs also were too much neglected. As early as 1818, less than ten years after coming to his patrimony, through the dishonesty of a too carelessly supervised agent, when called upon to pay for his mother the legacies required by the Imbonati Will, he found himself compelled with great regret to part with the ancestral villa *Caleotto*, the endeared home of his infancy. Notwithstanding however the distressful sacrifice, the lofty sentiment of the nobleman's heart forbade to press his dependents for the well-nigh impossible payment of their enormous arrears. On the contrary, at so great cost to himself, he not only

gave to each and all a free discharge, but in their need gave up to them his half of the standing crops in the field.

One hereditary trait however for which he was adored by his fellow countrymen remained fixed and eminent in his character — the love of liberty and the hatred of tyranny. It is reported of him that in boyhood at the school of the Somaschi friars he always wrote 'king,' 'emperor,' 'pope' with small initials and underwent punishment rather than begin these names with a capital letter. His profound hostility to the cruel domination of Austria over his country and his lively sympathy with the patriots who, in the first half of the last century, resisted unto blood and life-long imprisonment, were not secrets. The library of the house No. 1 Via Morone often witnessed the presence of such men as CONFALONIERI, PELLICO, BORSIERI, all afterward buried in the dungeons of the Spielberg while the author of *Il Cinque Maggio* was writing his masterpieces undisturbed by the Austrian police. "I remember," says his biogra-

pher, GIULIO CARCANO, "being there once with MANZONI, baron FREECHI, GROSSI, Marquis VISCONTI and others, when the Poet exclaimed laughing: 'I declare I am ashamed of presuming to be among you, I who have never been in arrest.'"

Three reasons, at least, for this immunity are obvious. First of all, the tone and temper of his writing, whether moral, civic or political, even the lyrics which reflect with an irresistible meaning a censure on the political situation, are like the man himself, of a gentle, lovely, lofty Christian character. The domineering power would sooner ignore them, than acknowledge the sting by involuntary blushes before the condemnation of the civilized world. Then his feeble condition of body, his shy avoidance of strenuous society and pushing activity rendered absurd the thought of his overt action in connection with any revolutionary unions or treasonable projects which were then the terror of the unpopular government. Finally, when he arrived at a place in the admiration and love of the nation and of the

world second only to that of DANTE ALIGHIERI, it was no longer safe and no government dared to molest his peaceful, glorious life.

It is also true that he took no active part in any public affairs though his social position placed and held him during his whole life in the very center of those patriotic struggles with which he intensely sympathized and which to his unbounded joy eventuated in the union and independence of Italy. Like GOETHE under similar conditions in Germany, he was by some faulted for this constant 'dwelling in the upper skies' of thought and sentiment when tyranny and the opportunity were trumpeting for hard, vulgar earthly blows to drive off the oppressor and free the fatherland. Leaving apart the consideration of the incompatibility between a supreme spiritual capacity refined by the culture of the most exalted and generous sentiments and by a consummate literary taste, and the coarse excitement, the brutal fury, the murderous uproar and the hellish disorders and wickednesses of actual warfare, his untrustworthy

physical constitution liable to frequent and unexpected attacks of vertigo and of fainting so that he could never go in the street unattended; a constitutional bashfulness which unnerved him in the presence of a crowd or even of individual strangers; and finally a natural hesitancy of speech and a stammering which was often so exaggerated by the mortification of it as to render him practically speechless — all this should seem worthily and wisely to confine his energies to his pen — and such a pen as he only could wield!

No man was ever less solicitous of honors for himself and to no man were these more eagerly and abundantly offered by his adoring fellow-countrymen. He used none of his hereditary titles. He declined all civic offices, orders and emoluments,[1] save near the end of his life (1860),

[1] His means having become much narrowed by the payment of the Imbonati legacies; by needed repairs on the Imbonati villa of *Brusuglio;* by losses through the plagiarism in cheap editions of his unprotected works in all parts of Italy; by the expenses of his large family (of children, mostly daughters to be supported in the decencies of their stations and dowered); by his life-long generosity to his innumerable friends (among whom was THOMAS GROSSI, who lived in his house for fifteen years); he accepted the royal offer of an annual pension of 12,000 lire.

in attestation of his satisfaction and joy at the consummation of his life-long desire and hope for the unification of Italy, he accepted from King Victor Emmanuel the nomination of SENATOR OF THE KINGDOM "for eminent services rendered to the fatherland." The capital was then at Turin. Three times only was his venerable figure seen in the senate-chamber. He was present in June, 1860, to give his oath of allegiance to the new sovereign; in February, 1861, to take part in the vote which proclaimed the Kingdom of Italy; in December, 1864, his 80th year, in inclement weather, he risked the hundred mile journey to vote for the transfer of the capital from Turin to Florence, which was to mean but a brief stop on the road to Rome and implied the fall of the temporal power of the popes, the goal of Italian unity. He never was in Rome, but he lived to see the day when the prophecy was fulfilled which fifty years before in the *Adelchi* he put in the mouth of Desiderio:

. . . That for which in vain
Our fathers sighed, has been preserved
For us; Rome shall be ours. . . .

Unable from the infirmities of age, increased by the loss of so many of his dear ones,[1] to be present at the sessions of the first Parliament there, he was honored with the citizenship of the city on the 28th of June, 1872. On the 22d of the following May, six weeks after the death of his idolized son PIETRO, in the early evening, in his life-long home in Via Morone, he quietly breathed his last, at the great age of eighty-eight years, two months and fifteen days. The body

[1] His wife, HENRIETTA BLONDEL, died in 1833—a blow from which MANZONI never fully recovered. His mother followed in 1841. Before 1856, he had buried four of HENRIETTA's six daughters, all married but one who was already awaiting marriage. In 1837, he took in second marriage TERESA BORRI, 20 years old, widow of Count STEFANO STAMPA, to whom she had been married at 18; who brought with her a little son. [From this time on MANZONI divided the autumn months between the stay at Brusuglio and the Villa di Lesa, the Stampa country-seat on the lake Maggiore. Here as the years went on the young STAMPA to whom the villa belonged surrounded the stepfather with the most affectionate and reverent attentions.—CÁRCANO.] In 1861, Signora TERESA died. After her death, his eldest and greatly loved son PIETRO returned with his family to No. 1 Via Morone, and affectionately cared for the declining years of his illustrious parent. Suddenly, in 1873, PIETRO died under the eyes of his father and the shock was too much for the remaining strength of the octogenarian Poet.

was deposited in the place of honor in the *Famedio*,[1] with august solemnities in which all Italy participated, the Sovereign being represented by Humbert, then prince royal. For the funeral Mass on the first anniversary of his death, GIUSEPPE VERDI wrote the immortal *Requiem* which bears the Poet's great name.

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[1] TEMPLE OF GLORY in the Cemetery (*Cimitero monumentale*) of Milan.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SACRED HYMNS

[*Gl' Inni Sacri*]

INTRODUCTION TO THE SACRED HYMNS.

Religious sentiment to whatever forms allied is essentially poetic and constitutes the most legitimate field possible for the exploitation of poetry; because, while with things seen and temporal it has to do inferentially, but stands in direct and immediate relations only with things unseen and eternal, it neither deals with the same tame materials, nor rests on the same tame foundations, as do the practical affairs of every-day life; and this is to define the very category and sphere itself of Poetry.

The most unfathomable fountain, therefore, of poetic material of the grandest and most inspiring sort must be located in the Bible and encycled in the dogmas of the Christian Church. The adumbration there of things unseen, intangible, unthinkable — the bottomless past, the boundless present, the inconceivable future, the inspirations of trust, of duty, of dread, of hope — the whole

subjective stream of thought, of emotion, the *tout ensemble* of which we call 'The Faith'—than this, however commonplace and prosaic many, or most expressions of it are, there exists, there can exist, no other loftier pathway for the flight of imagination, or more inspiring subject matter for picturesque definition and effective amplification.

This poetical opportunity has never been overlooked. On the contrary, it has been exploited by hosts of poetizers and hymn-writers in every age. To say nothing of the poetic prophecies and psalmodies in which, to so large an extent, the ante-christian faith lay embedded; passing over the magnificent canticles, such as the very ancient and anonymous *Gloria in excelsis* and the *Te Deum* of AMBROSE which for a millennium and longer have formed part of the daily worship of the universal church; to say nothing of a score or more of the best Latin hymns, such as *Veni Creator Spiritus*, anonymous, translated and imitated by so many later hymn-writers, *Dies Irae* of VON CELANO, *Stabat Mater* called of

JACOPONE, etc., etc.,—all sung in Christian assemblies and welcomed in private as perennial inspirations of devotion in every age and in every quarter of Christendom; beyond this and equally true it is, that the varying shades of Christian belief, as well heretical as orthodox, so-called, have always perceived the popular power of poetic images and numbers and more especially of rhyme and used this power for the promotion of the tenets of their faith in all the centuries abundantly.

ARIUS, in the beginning of the IV century, promoted the spread of his doctrine by writing "*Songs for the Sea, for the Mill, and for the Highway*" which a century later CHRYSOSTOM combated by counter-hymns in defense of the Catholic doctrine. JEROME, contemporary of the latter, tells us that in his day "you could not go into the fields but you should hear the plowman at his halleluiahs, the mower at his hymns and the vine-dresser intoning the [imitated] psalms."

Very great names besides those already mentioned stand among the host of noted writers of sacred hymns during the Latin middle ages. Especially notable is CLEMENS PRUDENTIUS, in the V century, whose work in many respects more nearly resembles the *Inni Sacri* of MANZONI, than that of any other sacred hymnist before or since. Most of all is this true of his little book, *Liber Cathemerinon* [*κατά ἡμέρα*, Diary (of prayers and meditations)], a collection of twelve religious lyrics, only two of which, however, the 11th and the 12th, that on the *Nativity* and that on the *Epiphany*, have, like all those of MANZONI'S *Sacred Hymns*, a special relation to the life of our LORD.[1]

Noteworthy as a hymn-writer in the VII century is the good, rather than poetic, Pope ST. GREGORY I; in the VIII, the venerable BEDE; in

[1] The other ten are for sanctifying the hours of the day; for Cock-crowing; for Morning; before Food; after Food; for Candle-lighting; at Retiring; at Fasting; after Fasting; for Every Hour of the Day; for the Obsequies of the Dead. He wrote also many other hymns for the festivals of saints and martyrs.

the XII, BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX with his:

Jesu, dulcis memoria

[Jesus the very thought of Thee]

in 190 stanzas; in the XIII, THOMAS AQUINAS with his famous:

Pange,[1] *lingua, gloriosi*
Corporis mysterium,

[Sing my tongue, sing famously
The glorious Body's mystery,]

which fixes the epoch of the transubstantiation dogma.

In short, all the way from the IV to the XVI century innumerable anonymous hymns, in which theological *formulæ* were embodied and sentiments of the Christian experience more or less sympathetically voiced, had a wider or narrower popular currency in the Church, sometimes taking obviously form and color from the time-spirit of the passing age, sometimes apparently aiding in no small degree to shape the religious character of the age upon which they have stamped their impress.

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[1] On the curious and beautiful use of this word *Pange* [strike (the lyre)] compare *Cinque Maggio*, St. iv. l. 5.

At the beginning of the XVI century, with the rise of Protestantism, came a very great outburst of doctrinal and sentimental hymns, especially in Germany, where they singularly met the temper and taste of the country, were eagerly sung by the common people on all occasions and in all places and exerted an unmeasured force in spreading there the great schism.

With an equal intensity of spirit, though with less extended result, the same phenomena appeared in France and in Scotland. In the former country, the first translation of the *Psalms*, by MAROT, in the beginning of the XVI century, wedded to native melodies, found an echo in the heart of the nation. "The king hummed them as he rode to the chase. The burghers of Paris sung them in crowds in the *Pré aux Clercs*. The sweet music was heard in the vineyards of Provence and on the market-boats of the Loire and the Rhone." Retouched and completed by BEZA, the translation lives in the Protestant worship to-day and is confessed on every side to have

done much toward the progress of the Reformed theology there.

In Scotland, as well, a considerable satisfaction of the popular heart and a distinct nourishment of the intellect and the imagination have been drawn from religious canticles adapted to old favorite melodies and widely diffused. The old rugged but effective translation of the *Psalms*, sung with full emphasis and hearty response, served well as a sympathetic background for the furious eloquence of KNOX and the stern warfare of the Covenanters.

English effective hymnology came later; and ranked by the test of popularity, certainly, and perhaps we may add of apparent results, the name of WATTS must stand in one of the highest places. His flowing numbers greeted the little one in the cradle, insinuating themselves irresistibly into his memory never to leave, followed him through every step of the Christian life, hovered over his waking bed in the night watches of health, warbled spiritual comforts at his bedside

in days of pain and sickness and descended with him into the grave itself under a roll of simple but inspiring music that takes hold on immortality. CHARLES WESLEY, standing almost the rival perhaps of WATTS, but rather in the subjective and emotional elements of the Christian life, labored not without great efficiency in his stirring music of the bagpipe, mainly to rouse to the fight against the forces of evil and to the struggle for Heaven. Later, the results in the Anglican Church of KEBLE'S *Christian Year*, where "you listen to a music like the lulling chime of church-bells," cannot be overlooked; and later still, in the English Catholic Communion and far beyond, the religious effect is notorious of FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER'S sweetly stirring metres and rhymes.

These great representative names constitute but a fragment of a proper specimen even and in the first rank only, of the innumerable multitude of hymn-writers in all time, whose strains have filled the ears of believers and unbelievers and

wrought mightily to form the sentiments and guide the conduct of individuals, as well as to shape the current of teaching, in many cases, of the Church herself. And the practical importance and efficiency of the whole tribe has ever been indisputable and markedly apparent, even when (as has happened infinitely the most often), the production is colorless and quite without value as poetry, critically considered. So much so, as every one knows, that the mass of hymns which in every age have been the most popular and apparently the most potent in realizing the motive of their creation have consisted of simple prose arranged in rather musical measures enhanced with rhyme. Such, with the rarest exceptions of here and there an inspired stanza or two, are in fact the productions even of the great names mentioned above. Often, indeed, rising to great propriety and beauty of expression and carrying thoughts of course of the highest value and usefulness, still they are not poetry in the critical sense. From this it has seemed to follow and

has been accepted in some quarters as a general truth, that no great hymn-writer will be a great poet; and no great poet a great hymn-writer. In proof of this it is easy to ask for the Poems of WATTS and the rest; and to note that MILTON and DANTE, whose prolific pens are always magnificently poetic and always dipped in dogma and in sentiment, have each left but one or two specimens of available Christian hymns.

The indication of a few very familiar examples will suffice to exhibit my meaning. Take first, HENRY KIRKE WHITE'S inspired and inspiring Hymn, so-called (whether correctly or no, is not the question here), entitled THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM, commencing:

'*When marshalled on the nightly plain.*'

This I suppose is poetry of the most undisputed type in every line, striking and pleasing from its exquisite poetical beauty, rather than calculated to awaken profound devotional passion. WHITE was, prospectively considered, a very great Poet but not a great hymn-writer.

Compare the Hymn, so called, so used and far more widely famous, of NAHUM TATE (as hymn-writer practically a rival, in the Anglican Church, of the great Dissenter, ISAAC WATTS), commencing:

'*While shepherds watched their flocks by night.*'

If this is to be deemed anything more than simple prose arranged in metre and rhymed, perhaps it might be fairly named a sacred ballad, without sharply defining the limits of that term. Though not poetry, in the highest critical sense, yet by a picturesque simplicity, a mellifluous flow of numbers and the invincible charm of rhyme, it has pleased the popular fancy and fixes itself immovably in the memory, but without greatly arousing devotional passion.

Finally, it must suffice to cite but one more familiar example and this time from the pen of WATTS himself. Let it be the Hymn, so-called, commencing:

'*Plunged in a gulf of dark despair.*'

Here every stanza and every line, though far

enough from being chiseled to perfect elegance, fulfills, I imagine, the undisputed conditions of poetry. While teaching religious dogma, it is indisputably a lyric poem; and with no feeble voice addresses, also, devotional passion. WATTS wrote some others of the same character, like that commencing:

'*Our God, our help in ages past,*'[1]

but in comparison with the massive bulk of his work they are few indeed. Still they establish beyond cavil his title of lyric poet, however we may classify the greater part of his work, or smile at his longer productions.

Now I wish to point out that the *Sacred Hymns* of MANZONI (*Gl' Inni Sacri*) belong to this last mentioned category, but with an important difference of motive and of execution.

The work of the Italian Poet, lyric in the extended sense of the term, was not designed, pri-

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[1] We are invincibly reminded here of Luther's famous:

'*Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott,*'

and cannot but compare the soft music and gentle trust of the English saint with the military tramp and dare-devil confidence of the coarser-natured German reformer, while each sends its own diverse thrill of devotional emotion into every Christian soul.

marily at least, to be sung in public functions of worship; but rather for the edification and enjoyment of Christian people in their closets and in their homes. In point of fact the beautiful verses are actually so used to-day throughout Italy and wherever the language of *si* is spoken. Thousands of infantile nurseries, and hearts if not bedchambers of adult persons of every degree, daily echo with this creation of unsurpassably elegant poetry as well as profoundly inspiring sentiment. It equally mingles in the meditations of the Philosopher and is coupled with infant prayers.[1]

To speak in general, two things are to be especially noted in the literary development of the *Sacred Hymns*—qualities, indeed, which belong to all MANZONI'S later work—namely, the absence of poetical allusions to the Pagan classics, which is

[1] "The Italians have recognized in them [these Hymns] a new example of the didactic religious lyre which inflames the soul with the love of the true, while at the same time wells up there a commanding beauty. They have applauded them for their sheer naturalness, for their severe conciseness, for their original, felicitous and daring flights. There would not be found to-day a person of civility who would not be ashamed not to have read and re-read them and there is no educational institution, nor a mother, I might say, who do not have them learned by heart by their children."—LUIGI VENTURI.

one of the fundamental dogmas of *romanticism* of which he was the high-priest in Italy[1]; and the *humanizing* element, conspicuous in the picturesque terms and the figures of speech that he chooses, in which his ideas, held as it were in solution, flow on in a stream clear and strong—that touch of nature which makes all men kin.

But the unique distinction of these Sacred Hymns lies in *the novelty and elegance of their architecture and in the impeccable perfection of their literary finish.* The early Latin compositions of PRUDENTIUS and the rest on the same and similar themes are so deficient artistically as to be out of the category of comparison with the Italian Poet. The enormous product of later times, especially

[1]Compare BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE, page 29. It must be understood that the *romanticism* which had developed in the literature of England and Germany and was beginning to dawn in the north of Italy had very peculiar characteristics; so that the name in Italy, had a different signification and importance. It arose here in opposition to the *classicism* of the French imperial age and to that still more empty of the age preceding; and proposed to increase the number of those to whom literature would give strength, with the special aim of preparing the way in their minds and hearts for the sighed-for political revolution; to which result did not lend themselves those too aristocratic and conventional forms which e. g., ALFIERI and FOSCOLO had indeed laden with burning and sincere patriotism. MANZONI furnished the inspiration, though not a collaborator in the periodical *Conciliatore*, one of the most prominent and powerful agencies of the romanticists.

the fruits of Protestantism in its Protean forms, though often presenting very perfect, sometimes even brilliantly beautiful specimens of true poetry, devotional and inspiring, consists in the best instances of fragments too sporadic and too brief to afford an opportunity for structural comparison with this finished series; and the general aim of these fragmentary creations is too religiously emotional, to yield distinct place to the highest literary effort.

MANZONI, in the *Inni Sacri* planned to rear, complete in frame-work and elaborated to a finish in every detail, *a single ideal edifice*—a literary structure that should stand out in the world for the ages to come a written monument at once of delight to the taste of the cultivated and as well, (as the Church of *St. Roche* had proved for him in the days of his tottering faith) an effluent source of quickening devotion alike to the learned and the lowly. Twelve hymns of curiously chiseled workmanship should be set, like monolith columns carved in artistic beauty, to sup-

port the foundation of the Church of God, "the House not made with hands," containing "the Faith once delivered to the Saints."

Like the temples of marble which are designed to endure, this was no work of a day, or a month, or a year. The labor upon it moved slowly, the period of construction continued to be prolonged, and a decade had elapsed, while yet it was not unveiled entire to the eyes of the world. It was begun under the very glow of the dawn of the new day of his returning faith[1]. It was wrought upon during the years of his maturing genius, and only after the nation and the world were ringing with astonished admiration[2] over the Napoleonic elegy, *Cinque Maggio*, was his final hand put to the fifth and last column[3] of the immortal structure. I cannot understand that it

[1] Compare the remark of FINZI in the prefatory note to the Resurrection, page 105.

[2] Produced also during this same period of his marvellous poetical achievement (1816-1822), were the two celebrated tragedies *Conte Carmagnola*, and the *Adelchi*, which contain the three wonderful choruses, *The Awakening of the Italians* in the former, and in the latter, *The Battle of Maclodio* and *The Death of Ermengarda*, each of which is in itself a masterpiece, and only yields (if indeed it does yield) precedence, to the two great Odes of more world-wide fame, which are given in this book.

[3] The Pentecost.

should be possible for any even moderately sensitive soul—believer or unbeliever in the dogmas that underlie them- to read with care the pregnant lines of these Hymns and not feel waking within him—will he or nil he—that movement of sentiment which evidences the deathless power of the creations of a great poet.

Notwithstanding the fact that the original design, conceived and entered upon more than ten years before, contemplated twelve distinct poems or cantos, namely, stated in natural order:

1. *The Nativity.*
2. *The Epiphany.*
3. *The Passion.*
4. *The Resurrection.*
5. *The Ascension.*
6. *The Pentecost.*
7. *The Corpus Christi.*
8. *The Chair of St. Peter.*
9. *The Assumption.*
10. *The Name of Mary.*
11. *All Saints.*
12. *The Dead.*

five only were written and these in the following order:

1. *The Resurrection* (April–June, 1812).
2. *The Name of Mary* (Nov., 1812–April, 1813).
3. *The Nativity* (July–November, 1813).
4. *The Passion* (March, 1814–October, 1815).
5. *The Pentecost* (April, 1817–October, 1822).

—Whenever, it should seem, the arbitrary inspiration fell upon him. Of the reasons for this in each or any case nothing is known.[1]

The work, however, as it stands, is by no means to be considered fragmentary. Not only is each single Hymn a symmetrical and finished creation and even every stanza, or pair of stanzas (in one or two instances a group of three or four), the finished treatment of its own theme, like the chapters of a well-written book, but the *tout ensemble* is made integral and complete, in the mind of the Poet, by these five Hymns, chosen, correlated and conjoined substructures[2] of the

[1] But see VENTURI'S remark, in the Introduction to the *Pentecost*, page 128 of this book.

[2] We have his own judgment that his work, as he chose to leave it, was complete, as it stands, since he lived in literary activity till fifty years later and in printing it many times made no addition.

one great great Temple of The Faith. They are, in fact, *architecturally* so nicely contrived and adjusted to one another, that for catching the composite beauty and feeling the full power of the Poet's work, they should be read for the first time, at least, at one sitting. Afterward they may well be studied singly in detail; the more carefully the more admirable will their artistic perfection appear. For it is one of the wonderful qualities of all MANZONI'S work, and in none more conspicuously so than in the creation of these glittering Hymns, that it gains in admiration by microscopic scrutiny.

THE SACRED HYMNS

[*Gl' Inni Sacri*]

THE NATIVITY

THE NATIVITY

THE HYMN OF THE NATIVITY, while poetically considered not the most perfect, perhaps, and said to have been never fully satisfactory to the author himself, has nevertheless always been the most popular of the *Sacred Hymns* of MANZONI. The ingenious simplicity in which the profoundest doctrines and the most important sentiments are voiced has long indicated it as suited for young children to memorize, while the rapid measures and the liveliness of the strain second with childish pleasure the useful acquisition; so that few indeed are the nurseries, among the serious classes where Italian is spoken, that do not echo with the infantine prattle of these flowing verses.

ARGUMENT.—In this Introductory Hymn, the Poet begins with an exposition of the helplessness of humanity (fallen through the first sin), by the similitude of a rock dislodged from a mountain-top and plunged into a pit in the valley below. Then is deployed a general statement of the facts and reasons for the Incarnation of the Son of God as the unique means of saving and regenerating the race of men. Next follow the announcement of a promised Liberator; a picture of the beneficent results of His coming; an exhibition of His Divine nature and of the unmeasured mercy of pardoning grace. After this the Poet proceeds to narrate the particulars of the Birth, the loving care and worship of the Mother, the adoration of the angel-host, the visit and imaginary salutation of

the Shepherds; and finally, emphasizing the stupendous contrast of the two natures conjoined in the heavenly Infant, closes the Hymn with a prophecy that, one coming day, all nations will return from an ignorant rejection of Him, recognize their King and come under His universal sway.

CHRISTMAS

I.

When a mighty mass of rock[1]
Is torn by some tremendous shock
From a skyey cliff and madly pours
Fall Adown the steep with echoing roars
Tearing along a deep-ploughed track
With clouds of dust up-rolling back
In the depth it strikes and stops with a shriek;

II.

There where it fell, its motion gone,
It lies a helpless inert stone;
Nor while the changing ages run
Remediless Will it again behold the sun
That gilded erst its lofty home,
Unless some friendly power come
To lift it from its tomb.

III.

So helpless lay the guilty son
Of woe, when the first sin was done—
The day ineffable that heard
of Man. The vengeful sentence and the word[1]
That sunk him then and sinks him still
To lowest deeps of every ill[2]—
Powerless his haughty will.[3]

IV.

Whoever of the sons of hate,[1]
Who, who among the reprobate
Problem of Rescue. To Him whom none can see and live[2]
Could come and say: 'Forgive, forgive'?
Could make a new compact[3] for aye,
Which from the Foe in full array
Should tear his captured prey?[4]

V.

Behold, for us a Child has been won,[1]
To us has been vouchsafed a Son;
Savior found. The hostile powers with trembling bow
And cower beneath his awful brow;[2]
To man His mighty hand He gives,
The wretched, helpless, moribund lives
And honor new achieves.[3]

VI.

Paradise Regained.

From the House upon the mountain[1]
Gushes now a heavenly fountain,[2]
  Through the vale of thorny woes
  Spreading living comfort goes;
Apples exude[3] from stumps of trees,
Fragrance floats on every breeze,
Flowers bloom, the thistle flees.[4]

VII.

Divinity of the Redeemer.

O Thou begot eternally[1]
Of the Eternal, one with Thee,
  Which 'mong the endless ages can
  Declare: 'With me Thy race began'?
Thou art. And of Thy vast command
The whole contains not Thee.[2] Thy hand
Has made and makes it stand.[3]

VIII.

Mystery of Grace.

And Thou didst not disdain to take
On Thee this clay[1] which Thou didst make?
  What merit its, what grace of Thine
  Allotted honor so divine?
If in His hidden counsel He
Will pardon so mysteriously,
What pity His must be!

IX.

To-day He was born. At Ephrata's gate,
To an hostelry lowly and vaticinate[1]
Ascended the Virgin,[2] the wonder of story,
The Birth. The Hope of the world and Israel's glory,
Bearing the marvelous weight in her womb.
Of Her He was born as He promised to come[3]
Very heir of Humanity's doom.

X.

The Virgin Mother, faint and wan,
Wrapped some poor cloths about her Son[1]
Adored by the Mother. And in a crib where oxen staid
Her wonderful Infant softly laid.[2]
Then she adored Him[3], bowed before
Her God,[4] who had vouchsaféd her
Pure womb to unbar.

XI.

Not at the sleepless guarded gates
Of earth's imperial potentates
A herald-angel of the sky
Announcement to the shepherds. Announced to men so great a joy;
But to shepherds[1] low and lone,
By this hard world unsought, unknown,
Bright flashing, he came down.

XII.

Celestial Display.

Thousands round him in the air[1]
Showering, like an army fair
  Through the broad expanse of night
  Crowded on their blazing flight,
Fire of zeal and sweetness bringing,
As in Heaven their song is ringing
To the Highest[2] singing.

XIII.

Heavenly Music.

Rolled up the hymn of hallowed mirth[1]
Withdrawing slowly from the earth[2]
  Across the parting clouds on high,
  Ascending deeper in the sky,
Faint and more faint at each remove,
Till to the ears of faithful love
The notes were lost above.

XIV.

Shepherds' Visit.

Swift the favored shepherds went[1]
To the lowly inn with minds intent;
  There they saw in the manger laid
  Where the hornéd oxen staid—
Saw the swaddled Infant lie
Welcomed thus; and heard faintly
The King of Heaven cry.[2]

XV.

Shepherds' worshipful Recognition.

'Heavenly Infant, do not weep;
O celestial Earth-born, sleep;
  Nor above Thy royal head
  Dare the roaring tempests spread,[1]
Wont, like stallions trained for war,
Mad o'er impious lands afar
To lead Thy vengeful car!

XVI.

Coming Dominion of the Prince of Peace.

'Peaceful sleep, fair stranger! now
Thee Earth's nations do not know,[1]
  But the day will come when they
  Shall be found beneath Thy sway[2];
When they Thee—the lowly thing
Hid in the dusty[3] stable ring—
Shall recognize their King.'

NOTES
TO THE NATIVITY

NOTES TO THE NATIVITY

[*The* METRE *of this Hymn in the original is a stanza of seven seven-syllable lines ; of which the 1st and 3d, accented on the final antepenult, are without rhyme ; the 2d and 4th, accented on the final penult, are tied together by rhyme ; the 5th and 6th, also accented on the final penult, are rhymed together like a couplet ; while the 7th, accented on the ultimate syllable, is rhymed with the corresponding syllable of the succeeding stanza. This last, a favorite device of the lively and musical* METASTASIO, *is much used by* MANZONI.]

(The Hymn was written July-November, 1813).

I.

[1]**When a mighty mass of rock, etc.** The idea of the Poet in applying the similitude of the precipitated rock (extended through the first four stanzas), to the state of fallen man, is probably original; but the figure, which the commentators applaud, is in a certain sense not original with our Poet. E. g., it is used by Virgil [Ae. XII, 684]:

Ac, veluti montis saxum de vertice praeceps
Quum ruit, avulsum vento, seu turbidus imber
Proluit, aut annis solvit sublapsa vetustas,
Fertur in abruptum. . . . .

"As when a fragment from a mountain torn
By raging tempests, or by torrents borne,
Or sapped by time, or loosened from the roots—
Prone through the void the rocky ruin shoots . . ."
[Dryden's trans.]

There is also an ecclesiastical hymn beginning:

Alto ex Olympi vertice
Summi Parentis Filius'
Ceu monte desectus lapis
Terras in imas decidens
Domus Supernæ et infimæ
Utrumque junxit angulum.

[As a stone cut off from mountain-top
Falling into lowest lands,
The Son of the Highest,
From the zenith of Heaven,
Has joined the House on high
With each nook below].

III.

[1]**The vengeful sentence and the word.** [Gen. ii, 17]. *Thou shalt surely die* (morally and physically).—[2]**of every ill.** The fall is the fundamental source of all human evils, of the body as well as of the soul, existing still though awaiting the final cure. Sin and suffering are joined inseparably.—[3]**Powerless his haughty will.** Proudly, yet ineffectively lifted in opposition to the command and the sentence of the LORD.

IV.

[1]**Sons of hate.** Subjective genitive [hating] i. e. born with a natural aversion to the holy law of the LORD. There are not wanting commentators, however, who explain the meaning of the Poet to be: "born into a world which, through the accumulated mass of wickednesses that have followed the first sin, is become for mortals a war-camp of hatreds." —**can see and live.** Compare Ex. xxxiii, 20: "*Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live.*" Recall also the well known custom of ancient kings. And compare I Tim. vi, 16: "*Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.*"—[3]**Could make a new compact, etc.** I. e. the Covenant of Redemption by a settlement of the old under the claims of which every mortal was morally bankrupt already.—[4]**Should tear his captured prey.** S. Ambrose in a beautiful Easter hymn says:

'Hell threw up the prey
Which she had malignantly swallowed.'

V.

[1]**For us a Child has been won.** [Is. ix, 6]: "*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.*"—[2]**cower beneath His awful brow.** The commentators compare the famous allusion to Jove, Iliad i, 528:

> "*He spoke and awful bends his sable brows;*
> *Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod,*
> *The stamp of fate and sanction of the god.*
> *High heaven with trembling the dread signal took,*
> *And all Olympus to the centre shook.*" [Pope's trans.]

That of the Roman bard: [Ae. ix, 106]:

> *Annuit et nutu totum tremefecit Olympum.*
> [He said it, and shook all Heaven with his nod.]

That of the Latin Pope. [Hor. Od. III, i, 8]:

> *Cuncta supercilio moventis.*
> "Shakes whole nature with His nod." [Dr. Francis' trans.]

—[3]**honor new achieves.** I. e. perhaps, Redemption has exalted man to a state more honorable than that of the lost innocence; or, possibly, man made at first merely a very noble creature of God, now, as a result of the Incarnation, has been elevated to a greater dignity, because he has thus become a son of God in a higher sense, *as brother of Jesus, the God-man.*

VI.

[1]**From the House upon the mountain.** [Is. ii, 2]: "*The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains.*"—**a heavenly fountain.**[2] [Joel iii, 18]: "*A fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of* [thorn-trees] *Shittim.*"
—[3]**Apples exude, etc.** The Christmas Hymn of Prudentius (A. D. 398), in the *Cathemerinon* [a book containing 12 hymns for the different parts of the year and for certain festivals of the Church, see Introduc. to Sacred Hymns, page 48, and note [1]] has:

"Every most harsh and barbarous thing,
O Child, felt thy Birth. . . .
The rocks exuded apples;
Dry stumps of oaks, *amomum*,
And the earth was showered with flowers."

—[4]**the thistle flees.** [Gen. iii, 18]: "*Thorns also and thistles shall it* [the ground] *bring forth to thee.*" Compare Cowper in *The Task* [book vi, line 745, *et seq.*]:

"Sweet is the harp of prophecy; . . .
O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,
Scenes of accomplished bliss! which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repealed."

VII.

The critics rank this stanza the most lyric of the whole hymn.—[1]**begot eternally.** [Ps. ii, 7]: "*This day* [the eternal day which has no limitations of time] *have I begotten Thee.*" [S. John viii, 58]: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.*" [S. John xvii, 5]: "*The glory which I had with Thee before the world was.*"—[2]**The whole contains not Thee.** [I Kings viii, 27]: "*The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee.*"—[3]**Has made, etc.** [Eph. iii, 9]: "*God created all things by Jesus Christ.*" [Col. i, 16, 17]: "*All things were created by Him and for Him; and by Him all things consist.*"

VIII.

[1]**This clay, etc.** A distinguished Italian critic makes the following observation on the Poet's choice here of the word clay [*argilla*]: "God said to man [Gen. iii, 19] '*Thou art*

[polve] *dust*'; Isaiah says [lxiv, 8] '*We are the* [*fango*, mud, so the Vulgate] *clay* [Eng. Bible]; in Eccles. [xvii, 1], we find: '*The Lord created man of the* [terra] *earth.*' Our Author does not say earth [*terra*], nor mud [*fango*], nor dust [*polve*], but *argilla* [crockery-clay]. Why? Who knows? Perhaps because it suggests to us the figure of the potter who makes at his pleasure [Rom. ix, 21] '*one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor.*' But it is certain that there is no conceit too subtle, no intention too acute to be believed, meditated, and adopted by the genius of ALEXANDER MANZONI."

IX.

[1]**Vaticinate.** [Micah v. 2]: "*Thou Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*"—[2]**Ascended the Virgin, etc.** [S. Lu. ii, 4,5]: "*Joseph went up . . . with Mary . . . being great with child.*"—[3]**promised to come.** [Is. vii, 14]: "*The virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.*"

X.

[1]**Wrapped . . . in a crib.** [S. Lu. ii, 7]: "*And she brought forth her first born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.*"—[2]**softly laid.** A poetical addition to the severe statement of the Evangel, but which everyone feels must be true and enjoy finding expressed.—[3]**Then she adored.** So the Church: 'Him whom she had borne she adored.'—[4]**Her God . . . unbar.**—Compare the *Te Deum*, 16th verse: *Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, non horuisti Virginis uterum.* [When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb].

XI.

[1]**But to shepherds . . . he came down.** [S. Lu. ii, 8, 9]: "*There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night, and lo the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.*"

XII.

[1]**Thousands round him . . . singing.** [S. Lu. ii, 13, 14]: "*Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men.*" Compare Milton's HYMN OF THE NATIVITY, stanza xi,, 5.

> "At last surrounds their sight
> A globe of circular light,
> That with long beams the shamefaced night arrayed;
> The helméd Cherubim,
> And sworded Seraphim,
> Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
> Harping in loud and solemn quire,
> With unexpressive notes to Heaven's new-born Heir."

—[2]**To the Highest.** I. e. They sang then on earth that praise which is perpetually sung in Heaven.

XIII.

[1]**Hallowed mirth.** MANZONI has been criticised for using this term [*allegro*] of the angelic hymn and on an occasion so holy, solemn, tremendous. But his sufficient justification seems to be that he uses the word to express the *highest gladness;* in which sense DANTE used *allegrezza* of the life of the glorified in Paradise. [Par. xxvii, 7]:

> *O gioia! O ineffabile allegrezza!*
> [Oh, joy! Oh, unspeakable mirth!]

Compare the *Resurrection* stanza xv, note [2].—**Withdrawing, etc.** [S. Lu. ii, 15]: "*Away from them into heaven.*"

XIV.

[1]**Swift the favored shepherds went.** [S. Lu. ii, 16]: '*They came with haste and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.*"—[2]**The King of Heaven cry.** A poetic addition to the sacred text, but a stupendous verisimilitude.

XV.

[1]**Dare the roaring tempests spread.** They must await the command of that new-born Infant! Compare [S. Mark v, 9]: *He arose and rebuked the wind . . . and the wind ceased.* The control of storms, in a poetical point of view, is a proper attribute of Deity. The commentators refer here to Virgil of Aeolus, [Aen. i, 53]:

Luctantes ventos tempestatesque sonoras
Imperio premit, ac vinclis et carcere frenat.

" With power imperial curbs the struggling winds,
And sounding tempests in dark prisons binds."

[Dryden's trans.]

Better, our own HENRY KIRKE WHITE:

"*Howl winds of night, your force combine;*
Without His high behest
Ye shall not, in the mountain-pine,
Disturb the sparrow's nest."

XVI.

[1]**Thee earth's nations do not know.** [Is. liii, 1]: "*Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*" [S. Matt. ii, 3 and 16]: "*When Herod had heard* [the wise men] *he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him . . . and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem.*"—[2]**Shall be found beneath Thy sway.** [Ps. ii, 8]: "*I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.*"—[3]**dusty,** since 'dust' is a Biblical term for degradation. [Is. lii, 2]: "*Shake thyself from the dust . . . O Jerusalem.*"

THE PASSION

THE PASSION

"In all Churches the Passion of our Lord, as narrated in the Gospels, has ever formed the central subject of the day's meditation and teaching, while psalm and prophecy have been gathered around it in saddened and penitent tones, the more perfectly to represent before God and man the events of this central Day of the world's history."—BLUNT.

ARGUMENT.—In this brief and mournful Hymn—now affecting, now stern, now consolatory—the Poet prepares the way for his swift but effectively limned sketch of the Passion of the Redeemer by picturing the sad solemnity of the Church's rites on Good Friday—among which are cited the absence of joyful bells, of church music, of the celebration of the Eucharist, and instead, the voicing of doleful chants and strange prophecies that announce the mysterious and astonishing sufferings of the coming Savior.

Then, he carves out of the evangelistic history those scenes which most powerfully conspire to awaken toward the exalted Sufferer reverence and affection and dwells in an especial manner on the vicarious agonies in the spirit.

Next, hinting at the vengeance threatened on the murderers, he adds, with his own ever-present Christlike temper, a curiously beautiful prayer for the Divine mercy even on them.

Finally, reverting to the agonized and exalted Mother, 'Queen of the sorrowful,' he invokes her pity and aid for all men in the sorrows of this life of exile and in the struggle for a blessed immortality.

GOOD FRIDAY

I.

Church in sorrow.

Trembling hearts with thoughts of woe,
Let us to God's temple go,
  Silent, solemn, sad to-day,
  Like those who with dumb dismay
Heard but now a dreadful tale
Dyed to make the heart-strings quail.
  Wait no sound of calling bell,[1]
  Saddest rite, silent as well.
Widow mourning for her dead,[2]
Such the altar widowéd.[3]

II.

Eucharist replaced by mournful chants.

Hymns have ceased and mystic lay,[1]
When descends in wondrous way,
  By the emblem shadowéd,
  Of love and peace the living Bread.
Song arises—sad lament,
Dazed Isaiah's mournful chant[2]
  While he feels the darkening pall[3]
  O'er his strainéd senses fall.[4]

III.

Of whom, Seer, speakest thou?
Who that fated One[1] to grow
In God's sight a slender shoot
From a thirsty, parchéd root?—
Object of the jester's rail,[2]
Face concealéd with a vail[3]
As if under Heaven's ban[4]—
That most abject mortal man?[5]

Prophecies of Degradation.

IV.

He is the Just the wicked crew
In unresisting silence slew;[1]
He is the Just;[2] and on His head[3]
The guilt of all the LORD has laid;
The holy Samson typified[4]
By him who freeing Israel died;
Who yielded for a faithless wife[5]
His mighty locks and tortured life.

The Atoner.

V.

Who sits upon the Heavenly Throne[1]
He made Himself Adam's true son,
Nor did disdain, as wretched heir
With brother-men, their woes to share;[2]
Welcomed the shame and willed to feel
The mortal anguish o'er Him steal
And pain and terror following sin,
Though sin he never knew within.[3]

Ineffable condescension.

VI.

Abandoned[1] by His Father there,
Spiritual sufferings. Repulse to His submissive prayer[2]
He bore; and oh, the foul embrace[3]
Of perjured friendship, face to face!—
Traitor's Remorse. A murderer's night[4] that soul became,
Conscience thundering, Hell aflame;[5]
The cries of Blood[6] he hears dismayed
And knows[7] what Blood he has betrayed.—

VII.

Oh, horror! see that gang ferine
Pour insults[1] on that face Divine,
Where the faultless[2] Sons of Heaven brook
Physical sufferings. Scarce with a timid glance to look.
The drunken still more wine desires,[3]
So outrage still their hatred fires
And greater crime their cruel joy
Inflames these crime-drunk to employ.

VIII.

But who he was—that silent man[1]
Before his judgment-seat profane,
Like victim to the altar's side,
Dragged there by Jewish guilt and pride—
Pilate's crime. The haughty Roman did not ken,
Yet dreamed[2] it more self-useful then,
By yielding innocence to die,
His vile[3] security to buy.

IX.

Self-imprecation of the Jews.

Came up an execrated prayer[1]
To Heaven, in vengence answered there;
The hosts were veiléd suddenly,[2]
God said: '*What ye demand shall be.*'
And still that Blood, by their fathers craved,
Falls fearful on that race depraved
Which many and oft has changes taken
Yet from its head THIS has not shaken.[3]

X.

Groan of the universe.

Lo, hardly on the accurséd bed[1]
The Man of Sorrows laid His head
And uttering a piteous cry[2]
Gave up His spirit with a sigh,
The wrath of God, secure and great,
On the exulting murderers laid its threat;
From Zion's watch-towers sounded doom,[3]
As if it said: '*Full soon I come.*'[4]

XI.

Prayer for mercy.

Great Father,[1] for the Immolate,
Thy wrath tremendous moderate;
Change[2] to a better, merciful LORD,
The maddened meaning of their word;
That Blood descend a gentle rain[3]
And wash e'en them from every stain;
Our common guilt—all were astray—
That sacred Blood must wash away.[4]

XII.

Thou, Mother, who unmoved didst see[1]
Crucified on Calvary
  Such a Son, O Queen of the sad,
  That we may see Him in His glory clad,
Pray for us; and that the pain
The good, from exile here, sustain,
  Mixed with His be our convoy[2]
  And earnest of eternal joy.[3]

For the Intercession of the B. V.

NOTES
TO THE PASSION

NOTES TO THE PASSION

[*The* METRE *of this Hymn in the original is a stanza of eight ten-syllable lines, all accented on the final penult except the 4th and 8th which are accented on the ultimate syllable and rhyme together; the 1st and 3d, the 2d and 5th rhyme together respectively; while the 6th and 7th rhyme together like a couplet. The scheme may be represented as two variated quatrains, thus: A B A C—B D D C. The effect is peculiarly solemn and mournful, not unlike,* MUTATIS MUTANDIS, *the German air to which is often sung the world-known hymn:*

'Rock of ages cleft for me']

(The Hymn was written March, 1814–October, 1815.)

I.

[1]**Wait no sound of calling bell.** On 'Great Thursday', while the *Gloria in excelcis* is being said, the church-bells are rung for the last time till Easter morning.—[2]**Widow mourning for her dead.** On Good Friday the Church chants the dirge: '*Weep, like a young spouse, O my people . . . stripped of the garments of mirth; because in the midst of thee has been slain the Savior of Israel.*'—[3]**Such the altar widowéd.** Bare of the accustomed ornaments, as always on Good Friday.

II.

[1]**Mystic lay,** the sacred ceremonies; omitted because there is no Eucharistic consecration on Good Friday.—[2]**Mournful chant.** Is. lii, 14, liii, 2–5., etc.—[3]**darkening pall,** the horrible vision of the future.—[4]**strainéd senses.** We may imagine the Prophet with eyes lifted toward heaven, thoughts abstracted and overpowered in the contemplation of the tremendous mystery.

III.

In this stanza every idea and almost every word is taken from the book of Isaiah.—[1]**One to grow . . . a slender shoot, etc.** [Is. liii, 2]: "*He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground.*" —[2]**Object of the jester's rail.** [Ps. lxix, 127]: "*I was the song of the drunkards,*"—[3]**Concealéd with a veil.** [Is. liii, 3]: "*He hid as it were His face from us.*"—[4]**as if under Heaven's ban.** "*We did esteem Him smitten of God.*"—[5]**abject mortal man.** "*Despised and rejected of men.*" [ibid].

IV.

[1]**He is the just the wicked . . . slew.** [Is. xliii, 7]: "*He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.*"—[2]**The just.** [Zech. ix, 9].—[3]**and on His head . . . has laid.** [Is. liii, 6]: "*The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*"—[4]**Holy Samson typified.** Among the points of the old champion's life in which, as noticed by the commentators, it was a symbol of that of the Christ, it is observed that his birth, like that of the Savior, was announced by an angel, and first to the mother; he was a Nazarene, a defender and judge of Israel; and finally, he died in a kind of emblematic way, extending his arms to the two columns and exterminating the Philistines, as Jesus extending His on the Cross completed human redemption. —[5]**for a faithless wife.** Dalila, betrayer of Samson, the Synagogue, persecutor of Christ.

V.

[1]**Who sits upon the Heavenly Throne.** [Ps. xlvii,8]. "*God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness.*"—[2]**their woes to share.** The commentators call attention here to the artistic order of the ideas; first the shame, then

the anguish of death, and finally the terror which follows guilt and is the most cruel of all pains for a soul conscious of its own innocence.—[3]**Though sin he never knew within.** [2 Cor. v, 21]: "*He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin.*"

VI.

[1]**Abandoned by His Father.** [Matt. xxvii, 46]: "*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*"—[2]**His submissive prayer.** [Matt. xxvi, 39]: "*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*"—[3]**The dire embrace.** Matt. xxvi, 49]: "*Judas came to Jesus and said: Hail, master, and kissed Him.*"—[4]**A murderer's night.** The Poet compares the soul of Judas to the night after a murder—a truly Manzonian metaphor.—[5]**Hell aflame,** frightful apparitions, ghosts, fears, anxieties, and the thousands of ideas and sentiments of horror which agitate the soul of the guilty. Judas, to be sure, had nothing to fear from human law, whose tool he had been in that awful drama of crime, but all the same, the Heaven-insulting cruelty completed, he undergoes the same terrors of the murderer who sees before his eyes, even in the darkness of the night, his prepared punishment awaiting him.—[6]**The cries of blood,** an expression drawn from the words of the LORD concerning murdered Abel, [Gen. iv, 10]: "*The voice of his blood crieth unto me from the ground.*" Abel the first martyr of righteousness is the accepted type of Christ.—[7]**knows what Blood.** The last recorded words of Judas were [Matt. xxvii, 4]: "*I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.*"

VII.

[1]**Pour insults.** [Matt. xxvi, 67 *et al.*]: "*Then did they spit in His face and buffeted Him.*"—[2]**Where the faultless etc.,** in amazed and overwhelming grief. This seems suggested to the Poet by the words of the apostle. [1 Pet. i,12]: "*Which things the angels desire to look into.*"—[3]**The drunken still more wine desires.** The commentators

applaud this peculiarly Manzonian conceit, true and profound, drawn from one of the commonest facts and illustrating a tremendous moral verity which the history of all human generations confirms. We may compare Virgil's *mala mentis gaudia*, [the bad joys of the mind, Ae. vi, 278] placed just before the entrance to Hell.

VIII.

[1]**That silent man.** [S. John xix, 9]: "*Pilate saith unto Jesus: Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.*"—[2]**dreamed.** Such truly Pilate appeared in the continued contradiction between his judgment and his acts, between his duty to save the innocent and his fear of displeasing the Jews.—[3]**Vile,** cheap in comparison with the price of innocent blood.

IX.

[1]**An execrated prayer.** [S. Matt. xvii, 24]: "*Then answered all the people and said: His blood be on us and on our children.*"—[2]**were veiléd suddenly,** horrified at hearing that 'prayer.'—[3]**not shaken.** Notable is the choice of the word, at which umbrage has been taken by certain critics who remark that, blood *flows* away, is not *shaken off*, but it seems rather that the Poet's idea of the blood here is that of a burden weighing heavy on the head and so understood the expression is the natural, forceful picture of a tremendous conceit.

X.

[1]**The accursed bed.** The critics note with applause how (instead of using 'wood' or some other correct term), by saying 'bed' which carries the idea of rest, comfort and sweetness and joining it with the qualification 'accursed,' the Poet flashes upon us a contrast which startles the attention and fills the mind with a sentiment of pity unexpected and profound.—[2]**uttering a piteous cry etc.** [S. Mark xv, 37,

S. Matt. xxvii, 50, S. Lu. xxiii, 46]: "*Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.*"—[3]**From Zion's watch-towers sounded doom.** [S. Matt. xxvii, 51, S. Mark xv, 38, S. Lu. xxiii, 44, 45]: "*The veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake and the rocks rent.*"—[4]**Full soon I come.** A tremendously apposite lyric top-stone to the story of the Passion.

XI.

[1]**Great Father.** That is equally of all. It is noteworthy how after the terrible ideas just developed, the mind of the Poet calms itself, as always, and reposes in affectionate and Christlike invocations for all.—[2]**Change.** In unison with the last breathings of Jesus Himself on the Cross: [S. Lu. xxiii, 34]: "*Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.*"—**to a better . . . meaning . . . gentle rain**[3], be an emblem of Christian baptism.—[4]**must wash away.** Comp. [apoc. i, 5]: "*Him that . . . washed us from our sins in His own Blood.*"

XII.

[1]**Unmoved didst see,** without weeping in the immensity of Her grief. [S. John xix, 25]: "*There stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother.*" S. Ambrose holds that the mental fortitude of MARY, at the foot of the Cross, is implied in the word '*stood*' [Stabat, *εἱστήκεισαν*],—[2]**Mixed with His be our convoy,** the object-lesson of the Passion, a consoling thought, a quickener of hope in the distressed and wronged here below; and however variously understood as a theological dogma, all the same a stupendously beautiful peroration to the necessarily lugubrious Hymn.—[3]**Earnest of eternal joy.** Compare [Rom. viii, 17]: "*If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.*" [2. Tim, ii, 12]: "*If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.*"

THE RESURRECTION

THE RESURRECTION

"The Poet enters *ex abrupto* into the midst of his argument with that enthusiasm and that lyric fire which show how his spirit was perfectly *compenetrated* with the material which he was girding himself to handle ; and the fervor of his feeling is equaled by the vivacious coloring of his imagination, which is one of the many evidences that go to disprove—even render absurd—the silly theory of DE GUBERNATIS and others (totally unsupported whether by any direct proof, or even any justifying induction), that the converted Poet undertook to write the *Sacred Hymns* under the peremptory requisition of *Monsignor* TOSI, his confessor; to say nothing of the fact that this great poet was not of the rank to be prescribed to; besides, if there ever was an intellect little disposed to write and poetize at the volition of another that intellect was MANZONI'S.

"On the contrary, in the heat and simplicity of the movement of this first [written] hymn and even in the rapid step of the metre, we seem to see the fervor of spontaneous religious sentiment which wells up from the soul and from an inflamed fancy, bursting forth with a certain passion of ascetic pathos; which goes bare of that exquisiteness of art which brightens and freshens Biblical images, elaborates subtle comparisons, and ornates with flowers of rhetoric and studious turns of expression."—FINZI.[1]

ARGUMENT: The Poet taking up his pen to commence the stupendous series of the *Sacred Hymns*, begins with this jubilant Ode and opens his song with a general salutation to the Church and the world in words used by the early Christians at first meeting on Easter morning. This being met by the doubts of the Chorus representing an incredulous world he reiterates his assertion with the most solemn of oaths which in itself assumes the Divinity of the Savior. He continues repeating his statement again and again adding at each repetition another and still another visible and tangible proof of the certainty of the stupendous fact. Then, he notes the liberation of the ancient Fathers at that awful

[1]Compare page 60.

moment; and touches on the testimony of the Prophets who had foretold in their days, with clearer and ever clearer strokes, the coming wonder of history. Again, he returns to the story and sets forth one by one the tremendous particulars as these are described by the Evangelists. Then, he calls on the faithful to admire the glorious mystery as adumbrated in the festive Rites of the Church and to solemnize the occasion with soul and body jubilant in the light of the truth. Finally, all is to be overshadowed by the expression of brotherly Love in generous and peaceful festivity, an earnest of the heavenly home. And it is in this way, he avers, Truth and Love (which in fact are what is typified in the great event), are destined, like Christ Himself and with Him, to issue triumphant from the tomb, change the fortunes of the universe and regenerate the human family.

EASTER-DAY

I.

The great Assertion.

POET.

He is risen![1]—

CHORUS.

How has his prey

Incredulity of the world.

From very death been snatchéd away?[2]
How the awful black gates vanquished,
Safe Himself once more[3] Who languished
In others' power?

POET.

By the Eternal

Reiteration of Dogma.

I swear[4] He has raised Him from the infernal.

II.

Yes, He is risen. That hallowéd head
No longer lies wrapped in the cloth of the dead.[1]

Ocular Evidence.

He is surely risen. At the side of the tomb
Lies the overturned door of the solitary[2] room.
Like the valorous champion[3] drunk after strife
The Lord has awaked to omnipotent life;

III.

As a pilgrim, arrived at midway of his road
And reposed for short sleep in the neighboring wood,

Pilgrim bivouac.

Returned to his senses, leaps up from his bed
And jauntily shakes[1] a dry leaf from his head
Which has soft floated down from an o'erhanging bough
And as light as an eider-down pauses there now,

IV.

So that marble sepulchral, its usefulness done,
Which had covered and weighed down the excavate stone,

Stroke of Omnipotence.

A slight waft of omnipotence[1] tosséd away,
When the soul (to the Godhead returned[2] and its clay,
From the silence of death in the dusty valley),[3]
To the Body commanded: *Rise, I am with thee.*[4]

V.

Effect Retroactive

In the realm of the faithful asleep in the LORD,[1]
A voice like a trumpet re-echoed the word:
"The LORD has unclosed the impassable gate,[2]
The LORD, the Immanuel,[3] *GOD incarnate!*
Ye sleepers in waiting delayed in this gloom,
Your exile is ended, the Redeemer[4] *is come!"*

VI.

Deliverance Universal.

Who could have ascended to Life till He
Had 'captive led captivity'?
He, He went down to the mute infernal[1]
To bring the old saints[2] to the kingdom supernal—
For ages the Sighed-for,[3] the Dread of the Foe,
The promiséd Balm for humanity's woe.

VII.

Evidential Visions of the Seers.

To the wondering Seers[1] of old,
(Who the load of the *future* foretold,
As a father to children intent[2]
Will narrate a *past* wondrous event),
HE appeared — what Jehovah had sworn[3]
In their words to a world dark and lorn —
The fair Sun of a glorious morn,[4]

VIII.

Testimony of the Prophets.

When Haggai's pledged[1] warnings out-rang
The DESIRE[2] OF ALL NATIONS to come;
When Esaias as daringly sang;[3]
When Daniel (clear reading the doom
Of the years unborn,[4] to his gaze
Enlightened with still brighter rays)
Remembered[5] the numberéd days.

IX.

The Eye-witnesses.

'Twas the twilight of morning,[1] all trembling with fears
And their faces bedewed with love's bitter tears,
Mary Magdalen stood[2] to lament and complain
With the other two Marys[3] the death of the slain,
When the firm ground of Zion's declivity[4] shakes,[5]
The grim guard of dishonor sore terrified quakes
And death-struck[6] an evidence makes;

X.

Angelic Evidence.

And reposing upon the great monument-stone[1]
Was a youth and a stranger now sitting alone —
His face was like lightning, his vesture of snow —
To the mourning enquirer he said soft and low:
"*O sorrowful woman, why still weepest thou?*[2]
Whom thou seekest is risen. He is not here now."[3]

XI.

Responsive Paschal Splendor.

Done then with every mourning strain,
Off every badge of inward pain,[1]
  Don splendor richer than of old,
  Change sad purple now to gold;
Holy priest in snowy stole[2]
Issue to your heavenly role
  Midst the brilliant lights,[3] and say:
  THE LORD IS RISEN, *is risen to-day!*

XII.

Congratulation of Mary.

From her bright altar[1] comes forth a voice:[2]
Heavenly Lady, rejoice, and rejoice!
  God for whom thou wast the merited nest
  When HE took on HIM humanity's vest,
HE has arisen, fulfilling HIS word;[3]
Pray for us thou, for thy prayers the LORD
From eternity willed to be heard.[4]

XIII.

The Feast of feasts.

Men and brethren, up and sing!
All the world is triumphing;
  Holy rites to-day employ
  Only words of solemn joy;[1]
Fairest of skies the Easter dawns,
The fairest grace the Easter lawns,[2]
  The babies smile[3] in fairest dress
  Each mother's strife in loveliness.

XIV.

Be the spread of the richest unboastful to-day;
Every Christian man's table in giftful array;[1]
Christian Brotherhood. Wasted treasure replevined from pride and from show[2]
To the home of the lowly in brotherhood flow;[3]
With diffusive abundance necessity pile,
Till every pinched board of grim poverty smile.

XV.

But far the reckless roaring cry
Of stormy revelry[1] —
Type of Eternal joy. All unlike the blessed mirth,[2]
All unlike the 'peace on earth'
With the heavenly likeness sealed
Of the joys to be revealed.

XVI.

For these[1] fairer dawn the rays
Of the sacred holidays.
But, alas, what will befall[2]
The great Dividing. The fool who scorns the heavenly call,
Whose rebel steps turn to the trail
That wildly wanders down to hell?
He who shall in his LORD confide
Shall rise again with HIM who died.

NOTES
TO THE RESURRECTION

NOTES TO THE RESURRECTION

[*The* METRE *of this Hymn in the original is a stanza of seven octosyllabic lines; of which the first four are accented on the penultimate syllable and rhyme alternately; the 5th and 6th are also penultimates, but rhyme together like a couplet; the 7th and last is accented on the ultimate syllable and bound by rhyme to the last of the succeeding stanza.*]

(The Hymn was written April–June, 1812.)

I.

[1]**He is risen!** The Poet is supposed to address the unbelieving, or at least careless world which is represented by the Chorus. His assertion, as the critics observe, is categorical; and ignoring all philosophical discussion, planting himself wholly on the faith of the Church and the testimony of eyewitness, he relies for sentimental effect on the well known power of insistent asseveration, picturesque description, and minuteness of undoubting detail. Beyond this literal sense, some commentators, like Carducci, see also an anagogic sense such as DANTE often uses, namely, the antithesis between human reason and the Christian faith.—[2]**From very death been snatchéd away?** DANTE [Inf. xii, 38] has the expression:

Che venisse Colui che la gran preda
Levò a Dite . . .

[When He came who the mighty spoil
Bore off from Dis . . .]

and earlier in a hymn of the Church it is said:

He tore away its prey from Hell.

—[3]**once more,** referring to His miracles in raising the dead and in delivering Himself from the hands of His enemies.

—[4]**I swear.** The critics call attention to the beauty and force of the antithesis here between the cold doubts of human reason and the ardent faith of the believer, laying philosophy, doubt, sceptical queries.

II.

[1]**The cloth of the dead.** The napkin [*il sudario*] in which according to the custom of Palestine the head of the dead was wrapped. It was found [S. John **xx**, 7]: "*Not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself*" and is alluded to here as one of the *visible* proofs that the body was not stolen, since thieves do not do things in that way.—[2]**the solitary room,** not only empty of the body of the Redeemer, but even forsaken by the frightened guard.—[3]**Like the valorous champion, etc.** This strong figure has given umbrage to some critics. But it is certainly Biblical, e. g. Ps. iii, 5 (understood by the Church to be spoken of Christ): "*I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me,*" and death is a sleep in the language of the Bible. In another Ps. [lxxviii, 65] we read: "*Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.*" Some have attempted to vindicate our Poet by observing (truly enough) that the term **inebriated** especially in poetry is often used to express an excessive excitement produced by other causes than wine, as love, pleasure, sorrow, fury, or other extraordinary overflow of feeling, and cite from the Scriptures: "*They are drunken but not with wine, etc.*" [Is. **xxix**, 9], and point out that the poet has not said *wine.* So Dante [Par. **xxvii**, 1–3]:

> "*Al Padre, al Figlio, allo Spirito santo*"
> *Cominciò "gloria" tutto 'l Paradiso,*
> *Sì che m'inebriava il dolce canto.*
>
> ["To Father, Spirit and the Son
> Be glory," Paradise begun,
> So that the sweet song made me drunk.]

Compare especially the 5th verse of the xxiii Ps. which in King James' Bible reads: "*my cup runneth over*"; stands in the version of the lxx: *καὶ τὸ ποτήριόν σου μεθύσκον ὡς κράτιστον* [and thy drinking-cup makes me drunk like the strongest wine]; followed by the Vulgate: *et calix meus inebrians quam præclarus est!* [and my inebriating chalice how extraordinary!]; which the Doctors of the Church have understood as a prophetic reference to the eucharistic chalice by which the soul is so enlivened spiritually as properly to be said to be inebriated with joys and hopes. In a note to this passage in the Vulgate, Archbishop Martini says: "The chalice in which one is given to drink the blood of the Lord, whence the soul is not comforted merely but inebriated with sweetness and delight, because cutting away from the memory of and the inclination to former vanities and sins, the soul is lifted to the capacity to enjoy the pure consolations and sweet delights of the spirit." This general understanding and use, seems sufficiently to relieve the term from the charge of offensive crudeness, while it seems to me allowable, of so subtle a thinker and so bold a poet as ALEXANDER MANZONI, to suppose that it pleased his fancy to picture the joy of the Man Christ Jesus ("*who* [Heb. xii, 2.] *for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross*"), like an athlete from the lists having victoriously finished the terrible fight for man with Sin and Death to have reposed in the *drunkenness of victory* during the three days' sleep in the grave!—a stupendous conceit truly, but as truly properly Manzonian.

III.

[1]**And jauntily shakes, etc.** It may be observed that in the Poet's figure of omnipotence the traveler does not even lift his hand to remove the so trifling weight; slightly to agitate his head is enough. And the critics here refer us to the famous simile of DANTE (picturing the *lightness* of the disembodied spirits crossing the Styx and crowding weightless into Charon's shadowy craft) [Inf. iii, 112]:

Come d' autunno si levan le foglie
L' una appresso dell' altra, infin che 'l ramo
Rende alla terra tutte le sue spoglie;

[As leaves of autumn floating fall
And chase each other round and round,
Till every tree is stripped of all
And lays its glories on the ground;]

IV.

[1]**A slight waft of omnipotence tossed away.** S. Matthew says [xxviii, 2]: "*The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it.*" The justification of this poetic license must be, if there be any, that, according to the legal maxim, *qui facit per alium facit per se*, it was the omnipotence of Christ which wrought by means of the angel.—[2]**to the Godhead returned etc.** The expression is founded on the doctrine of S. Thomas Aquinas who says [P. iii, *quaest*, 50, 2]: "*Although Christ, as a man, died, the Divinity all the same remained inseparable as well from the body as from the soul.*" —[3]**the dusty valley.** By a very bold figure the Poet here applies to the mysterious abode of departed spirits the common attributes (foulness and dust), of the grave itself. The commentators justify the Poet by citing the Prophet [Zech. ix, 11]: "*I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water*," the deep pit destitute even of water being understood by the Church, in ecclesiastical language, as a metonymy for Limbo.—[4]**Rise I am with thee,** an interpretation of the words of Christ [S. John xi, 25]: "*I am the Resurrection and the Life.*"

V.

[1]**Asleep in the Lord.** So Dante [Par. xxxii, 24]:

Da questa parte, onde 'l fiore è maturo
Di tutte le sue foglie, sono assisi
Quei che credettero in Cristo venturo.

[On this side where the flower in bloom
Its perfect petals opes,
Sit they who believed in Christ to come.]

So in the Book of Ecclesiasticus [xxiv, 45, Vulgate version] understood by the Church as a prophecy of Christ: *I will penetrate all the lowest parts of the earth and view all the sleeping and give light to all those who hope in the Lord.* —[2]**unclosed the impassable gate.** In a hymn of S. Ambrose occurs the line:

"*Has broken into the chambers below.*"

—[3]**the Immanuel.** [Is. vii, 14, marg]: "*Thou, O Virgin, shalt call His name Immanuel.*" [Matt. i, 23]: "*Which being interpreted is, God with us.*"—[4]**the Redeemer is come.** [Isaiah lix, 20]: "*The Redeemer shall come to Zion.*"

VI.

[1]**The mute infernal.** The grave is silent. But the term is of poetical usage for 'gloom,' absence of light. So Dante [Inf. v, 28]:

Io venni in luogo d' ogni luce muto.

[I came into a place *mute* of all light].

—[2]**To bring the old Saints.** An Ambrosian hymn says:

From the cavern infernal
He drew the host paternal
To the splendors of life eternal.

—[3]**Sighed-for.** Compare S. Paul [Rom. ix, 22, 23]: "*The whole creation groaneth . . . even we . . waiting for . . the redemption, etc.*"

VII.

[1]**The wondering Seers.** The text has *mirabili* [wonderful] which may mean, perhaps, wonderful in that they were given to see, in prophetic vision, *so particularly* the personalities of the future Redeemer and the vicissitudes of His coming kingdom. But I prefer to understand it, as more Manzonian, 'full of wonder,' i. e., 'wondering,' as given in the translation.—[2]**As a father to children intent.** A distinguished critic observes, that "the similitude of the father narrating to his children past events sets forth beautifully and effectively, 1st, the positiveness and clearness of the

words of the wonderful Seers; and 2d, the affection with which they made known to the Jewish people the promised Deliverer."—[3]**Jehovah had sworn.** [Ps. cx, 4]: "*The* LORD *hath sworn, and will not repent, 'Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.'*"—[4]**The fair Sun of a glorious morn.** [Mal. iv, 2]: "*The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.*" So in Dante, [Purg. vii, 25]. Virgil says to Sordello:

> *Non per far, ma per non fare, ho perduto*
> *Di veder l' alto Sol, che tu disiri.*
>
> [I by not doing, not by doing lost
> The sight of that high *Sun* which thou desirest.]

VIII.

[1]**Pledged.** The original has, very effectively, the term *mallevaro*, an old and now unused word meaning, in legal language, 'became bail for.'—[2]THE DESIRE. [Haggai ii, 7]: "*I will shake all nations and the Desire of all nations shall come.*"—[3]**as daringly sang.** [Is. ix, 6, 7]: "*The government shall be on His shoulder . . . Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.*"—[4]**the years unborn.** The 'seventy weeks' [Dan. ix, 24-26].—[5]**Remembered.** He *saw* in the vision and *read* on the page of the eternal book the number of the days. The critics applaud the vividness of the Poet's figure and the novelty of giving to the prescience of the *future* the same property in its realm which the memory has of things that are *past*.

IX.

The twilight of morning. [S. John, xx, 1]: "*Early when it was yet dark.*" [Matt. xxviii, 1]: "*As it began to dawn.*"—[2]**Mary Magdalen stood.** [S. John xx, 11]: "*Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping.*"—[3]**the other two Marys.** [S. Mark xvi, 1]: "*Mary the mother of James and* [Mary] *Salome.*"—[4]**Zion's declivity,** the

place of the Sepulchre, on the N. W. *slope* of Mt. Zion, where the church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands; compare S. John xix, 41, 42: "*In the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus . . . for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.*"—[5]**Shakes.** [Matt. xxviii, 2]: "*There was a great earthquake.*"—[6]**the grim guard . . . death-struck.** [Matt. xxviii, 4.]: "*The keepers did shake and became as dead men.*"

X.

[1]**And reposing . . . his vesture of snow.** [Matt. xxviii, 2, 3]: "*The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.*"—[2]**Why still weepest thou?** [John xx, 13]: "*Woman, why weepest thou?*" **Whom thou seekest . . . not here now.** [Matt. xxviii, 6]: *He is not here for He is risen.*"

XI.

[1]**Done then . . . inward pain,** the rites and robes of "holy week."—[2]**snowy stole.** Hence Easter-tide is called, in ecclesiastical language, *in albis.*—[3]**the brilliant lights,** the candles made specially numerous and brilliant to glorify Easter.

XII.

[1]**Bright altar,** glittering with Easter flowers.—[2]**A voice.** I. e., the Antiphon for the whole of Easter-tide:

V. Regina coeli laetare, [Queen of heaven rejoice]
R. Quia quem mereisti portare, [For whom Thou wast worthy to bear]
V. Resurrexit sicut dixit. [He has risen as He said].
R. Ora pro nobis Deum. [Pray God for us].

—[3]**fulfilling His word.** [S. Mark ix, 31]: "*The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men and they shall kill Him; and after that he is killed, He shall rise the third day.*" —[4]**willed to be heard.** So the Catholic Doctors teach.

XIII.

[1]**Only words of solemn joy.** On the solemn day of Easter, every prayer of the Church catholic ends with the Alleluia.—[2]**Fairest of skies . . . lawns.** Two striking metaphors for people looking at the dawn through happy eyes, and walking the lawns robed in fair apparel. Compare the universal '*Easter hat*' of the fair. In an Easter hymn S. Ambrose also has:

> A brighter dawn gilds all the sky,
> The world is filled with mirth and joy.

—[3]**The babies smile.** Compare Notes to the Pentecost Stanza xvii, note [1].

XIV.

[1]**Giftful array.** A mild play on the term 'giftful'. Every Easter table (by imparting and receiving if slight yet significant gifts even from poorer to richer), should illustrate in a material way, brotherly love between members of the great family of the risen Lord.—[2]**wasted treasure replevined etc.** Because pride and pomp are the exhibition and exercise of selfishness which is the opposite of Christian love and a mortal foe to the spirit of the suffering, dying, risen Redeemer.—[3]**To the home . . . flow.** The words chosen by the Poet here carry the conceit of a movement smooth and perhaps swift as well as abundant but not noisy, according to the words of the Master [Matt. vi, 2]: "*When thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee.*"

XV.

[1]**Far . . . roaring . . . revelry.** With the whole stanza, compare S. Paul [1 Cor. v, 8]: "*Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*"—[2]**blessed mirth.** Compare the *Nativity*, stanza xiii, note [1].

XVI.

[1]**For these.** I. e. those who with preparation of heart enter into and in conduct effectuate the spirit of the holidays. Says CARDUCCI: "We would gladly do without this last stanza, but at all events, the poem is finished with the first two lines." Other acute and eminent critics dissent and defending the Poet, claim that the whole stanza is but in harmony with the profoundly charitable sentiment which is apposite to complete the ascetic tone of the whole Hymn. FINZI, in particular, says: "The sentiment is so consonant with the spirit of charity which glows in the heart of the true believer that I do not comprehend how it can be judged other than an appropriate and beautiful close of a Hymn which celebrates the universal joy of Christianity in the result effected by the Resurrection."—[2]**What will befall . . .** It is notable that the Poet does not answer the question—in fact it has no answer—but turns from it with a 'happy negligence;' and closes with the bright prospect of a Resurrection-Day crowning the wisdom of the faithful. [Dan. xii, 2, 3]: *And the multitude of them who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.* [John v, 28]: *The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.*

THE PENTECOST

THE PENTECOST

"This great festival which commemorates the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles to abide in the Church forever, according to the promise of Christ, has been annually observed from the very beginning, having at first been engrafted by the Jewish Christians upon the festival of Pentecost, but being mentioned as a separate feast of the Church by the earliest writers among the Gentile Christians, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, etc. Most old writers on the festivals of the English Church have considered the original name, White Sunday (or Whitsunday), as derived from the chrisoms, or white mantles of the newly baptized."—BLUNT.

The great Hymn of the *Pentecost*, perhaps the *chef-d'œuvre* of all the great author's poetical work, during many years' incubation,[1] was slowly perfected and finished five years later than the last of the other *Sacred Hymns* and one year after the civil masterpiece, *Il Cinque Maggio.* The Poet was then at the ripest of his powers, physical and mental, natural and acquired, and the printing of the Napoleonic Ode had then lifted him to a European fame.

A quality of the *Sacred Hymns*, and most of all of the *Pentecost*, which entailed upon the Poet a greatly complicating difficulty of execution lay in his self-imposed restriction of never introducing for poetical effect material not found expressed or implied in the sacred record. All the force and fire of his nature, all the skill of trained experience, every device of accomplished art for arresting the attention and pleasing the cultivated taste, every effective instrument for pricking the sensibilities of high and low,—the whole artillery of figures, of poetical diction, of metre, of rhyme, of curious unrhymed interloping lines he uses in the full abandon of invincible genius, marching steadily on, trampling down every difficulty, curbing himself only within the limits of "the faith

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[1] See Introduction to the Sacred Hymns, page 60 of this book.

once delivered," and often — too often for the contentment of the unbelieving critic — this faith expressed in the very words of the BOOK.

Of this conjunction of genius with the mystic sentiment in the *Pentecost* LUIGI VENTURI says: "Taking for his subject the establishment of that society which was to renovate the earth, the poet fructified the theme in an amplitude and universality of conceits unknown to modern poesy; and as the light of day while illuminating warms the world, so in these verses, from the meditations of the mind, rays out the affection of the heart, because by it inspired. After the last cantos of the *Paradiso*, of Dante, never has any Italian poet's word struck out a strain so lofty, nor a match in artistic force, nor of equal riches in rare forms of language. The *Pentecoste* finished, the Poet closed the series of the *Sacred Hymns*. Was it that he would end like the eagle, which having spread his last flight hides himself in the inaccessible peaks of the Alps?"

ARGUMENT.—Seizing on the great fact that the descent of the HOLY SPIRIT was the beginning and foundation of the diffusion of the Faith and the constitution of the Church, in place of lingering to narrate the evangelic story like S. Ambrose, the greater part of whose Pentecostal hymns dwell on the minute particulars (drawn from the record in the book of *The Acts*), which accompanied the descent of the tongues, MANZONI opens abruptly his lyric strain with a fervid and eloquent apostrophe to the Church herself, now mighty and glorious, then beginning in low estate, small, fearful, hiding from the sight of wicked and hostile men. Slightly touching next, on the Pentecostal miracle, by means of a simile drawn from the fructifying power of light in the natural world, the lyric song goes on picturing the invincibly established Church (under the diffusion of her inspired faith, and under the rising of a generation of holy freemen), as Mother of a sanctified family renewing and to renew the Earth.

This constitutes the first part, including stanzas I—X. In the second part, stanzas XI—XVIII, the Hymn is amplified and concluded by that celebrated peroration—an extended and minutely particularized Invocation for the gifts of the Paraclete—gifts of faith, of illumination, of peaceableness, of love, of comforting hope, of a virtuous life, of modest and successful activity, of sanctified age and a victorious dying-bed.[1]

The profoundly religious and even 'orthodox' coloring and flavor, unsuited to the taste or faith of some, may cause them to feel less forcibly the literary perfections of *La Pentecoste* in comparison with *Il Cinque Maggio*, but wherever the perception and enjoyment are not dulled by such disrelish, this Hymn to the HOLY SPIRIT will ever stand the most perfect and beautiful monument of his poetic genius which MANZONI has left to the world.

[1] "The prayer of the *Pentecost* is of such a moral and ideal elevation that it can be used by men of every religion, and makes of this not only the most lofty and perfect of the *Sacred Hymns*, but one of the most excellent productions of the modern lyre."—D'ANCONA.

WHITSUNDAY

I.

Mother of the sons of God,
  Image of the house supernal,[1]
Conservator of the Blood[2]
  Ever changeless and eternal,[3]
Church Militant
Thou who while the ages wear
  Spread'st thy tents[4] unfailingly,
Battling, suffering, voiced with prayer,
  Here and to the farthest sea,[5]

II.

Vanished.

Camp of those whose hope is might,[1]
  Church of Him[2] who is eternal,
Where wast thou?—what pit or height
  Hid thee at thy birth supernal,
When thy King, by traitor-bands
  Doomed to die on calvary,
Purpled o'er those hallowed sands[3]—
  Altar for eternity?[4]

III.

Potential Rehabilitation.

When the sacred Body, come
  From sepulchral darkness free,
Mighty, from the breathless tomb,
  Breathed a new vitality;
And when in His hand[1] He brought
  Price of pardon, paid alone,
From this earthy world of naught
  Rising to His Father's throne;

IV.

Timid Reserve.

Thou, companion of His groaning,[1]
  Knowing then as knowing now
His mysterious atoning,
  Deathless daughter,[2] where wast thou?—
Terror-stricken,[3] watching only
  Where thou mad'st thy hidden stay,
In oblivion and lonely,
  Waiting for that promised day,[4]

V.

Descent of the HOLY SPIRIT.

When descending[1] on thee came
The renewing SPIRIT, and
Bright, an unconsuméd flame
Kindled on thy glowing hand;[2]
When, a signal[3] on the mountain,[4]
He re-set thee in thy place,
And upon thy lips the fountain[5]
Opened of redeeming grace.

VI.

Gift of Tongues.

As the swift descending light[1]
Showers, while morning twilight closes,
Waking varied colors bright
Where its golden foot reposes,
So the voices[2] multiplied,
Instinct with the SPIRIT's word,
Arab, Parthian, Elamide
Each in his own idiom heard:

VII.

Apostles' imaginary Sermon.

"Pagan men from every shore,[1]
Lo, Solima's mystery!
Cease vain idols to adore,
List the holy, heavenly cry:
'Weary of defiled ways,
Earth, O earth return to HIM.'"—
Ye, also, of coming days
Opening now that happier time,[2]

VIII.

The Ages to be renewed by renewed Maternity.

Spouses, whom a leap advises
  Of the burden yet concealed
And the trembling heart premises
  Augured pains of womb unsealed,
To no goddess now accord
  Worship, vow, or mother's prayer;
A deposit[1] for the LORD
  Is the creature growing there.

IX.

New Equality.

Shall she tasting slavery's curse
  Kiss her baby with a sigh
And on happy breasts that nurse
  Free born gaze with envying eye?
To the poor[1] the LORD doth give
  Heirship in the realm He bought
And on every child of Eve[2]
  In His saving sorrow thought.

X.

New Liberty and Peace.

Liberty before unknown[1]
  Speak the heavens,[2] and nations new,[3]
Conquests new,[4] and glory won,[5]
  Virtue fairer to pursue,[6]
Peace new-born[7] that aye abides,
  Peace that fears nor smiles can shake
Nor worldly wiles. The world derides
  Giving not and cannot take.

XI.

THE INVOCATION.

The Church united by the HOLY SPIRIT

O prevailing SPIRIT,[1] come
To Thy solemn altars! We,
Hermits in a forest home,
Wanderers on the lonely sea,
From Lebanon to Andes hoar,
From Erin's green to bald[2] Haiti,
Scattered over every shore,
Joined into one heart by Thee,[3]

XII.

Craves the various gifts of the SPIRIT.

We implore Thee! O forgiving
SPIRIT, now descend again,
Aid Thy own in holy living,
Aid, also, unknowing men;
Come and re-create; revive
Dead hearts, doubting and in sins;
Vanquish and the vanquished give,
Divine reward, Thyself who wins.[1]

XIII.

Sanctifying grace.

Come as Love[1] and softly lay
Haughty passion, ire, revenge;
Thoughts inspire the final day,[2]
Full of memories, will not change;
All the gifts Thy grace disposes[3]
Nourish with perennial power,
As the quickening Sun uncloses
From the inactive germ the flower,

XIV.

Which, unsolaced and unfed,
On the sod will slowly die,
Lifting ne'er its bloom outspread
In all the colors of the sky,
Unless to it, fused in air,
Soft returns, genial and bright,
Giver of vigor everywhere,
Tireless commissary,[2] heavenly light.

Developing grace.

XV.

We implore Thee! comfort bring
On the thoughts of them who weep,
Soft as evening Zephyrs wing,
Soothing as breezes from the deep.
Fall a whirlwind[1] on the haughty
Thoughts of selfish, cruel men;
Breathe a fear to teach their naughty
Spirits piety again.

Comforting grace.

XVI.

Through Thee may the poor[1] his eye
Lifting heavenward — to his own[2] —
Turn his sighs to songs of joy
Thinking on his LIKE[3] unknown.
Him with plenty graced to live
Wearing smiles[4] that goodness wakes
In shrinking silence[5] mind to give —
Which with Thee acceptance[6] makes.

Unworldly Inspirations.

XVII.

Breathe into the ineffable smile,[1]
Of our darling infant throng;
Cheeks of every damosel
Crimson deep at hint of wrong;
To the hidden[2] virgins send
Hidden joys like those above;
Innocent bliss[3] to spouses lend,
Faith and consecrated love;[4]

Practical Religion.

XVIII.

Temper the glow[1] of ardent youth,
Proud self-confidence[2] forfend;
Prosper manhood's plans[3] of truth
Onward, upward to their end.
Crown the head of hoary hairs
With glory[4] holiness doth paint;
Brighten the wandering gaze[5] that wears
The dying visions of the saint.[6]

Holy Living and Dying.

NOTES
TO THE PENTECOST

NOTES TO THE PENTECOST

[*The* METRE *of this Hymn in the original, the most artificial of all, is a stanza of eight seven-syllable lines, divisible into two variated quatrains: the first quatrain of lines alternatively antepenultimate unrhymed and penultimate rhymed: the second of one line antepenultimate unrhymed, two penultimates rhymed together like a couplet, and one with ultimate accent which is linked by rhyme with the last line of the succeeding stanza. The effect is that of a kind of shortened Spencerian stanza.*]

(The Hymn was written April–October, 1817–October, 1822).

I.

[1]**Image of the house supernal.** [Heb. xii, 22]: "*The heavenly Jerusalem.*"—[2]**Conservator of the Blood.** In the Sacrament of the Eucharist.—[3]**Ever changeless etc.** [Heb. xiii, 20]: "*The Blood of the everlasting covenant.*"—[4]**Spread'st thy tents.** [Is. liv, 2]: *Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations.*—[5]**to the farthest sea.** [Ps. lxxii, 8]: "*He shall have dominion from sea to sea.*"

II.

[1]**Whose hope is might.** [1. Thess. v, 8]: *For a helmet, the hope of salvation.* [Rom. viii, 24]: *Saved by hope.* [Heb. vi, 19]: "*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul.*"—[2]**Him who is eternal.** [1 Tim. iii, 15]: "*The Church of the living God.*"—[3]**Purpled o'er etc.** The commentators make the Poet have in mind here DANTE [Purg. xxvii, 39]:

Allor che 'l gelso diventò vermiglio.
[What time the mulberry became vermilion.]

The allusion, of course, in DANTE is to the well-known story of the two lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe, who successively killed themselves under a white mulberry tree and whose blood

caused the color of the fruit ever afterward to be changed from white to purple. The story is told by Ovid, [Met. iv, 55–166], —[4]**Altar for eternity,** Calvary on which was offered the Great Sacrifice. [Heb. ix, 26]: "*Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*"

III.

[1]**When in His hand . . . price of pardon.** The commentators give alternative explanations of the Poet's meaning here; 1st, the *fruit of pardon* (as the Doctors of the Church teach), that Christ conducted with Himself to Heaven the souls of the old Fathers, liberated by Him from Limbo, as a triumphant *cortége* of His own ascension, according to the Scripture (which the Church refers to this action [Wis. iii, 1]: "*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God;*" or 2d, *the cost of pardon*, the humility of the Incarnation, the shame, the pain, the blood and death of the Cross—all which merits Christ carried with Him, as it were, *in His hand*, to the Throne of the Father together with His thrice-holy humanity, according to the Scripture [Heb. i, 3]: "*When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*"

IV.

[1]**Companion of His groaning.** The Church is contemporaneous and co-extensive with life of Christ. It was born with Him, was present at His first infant scream, witnessed the daily groans of the Man of Sorrows, and having been taught by His own lips His mysterious doctrine, heard with agonized terror on Calvary His dying cry.—[2]**Deathless daughter,** fruit of His *eternal victory* over sin and

the grave.—[3]**Terror-stricken . . . thy hidden stay.** [Acts i, 13, 15; S. John xx, 19]. The Church consisting then of the apostles and the "*hundred and twenty*" believers, awake indeed (**watching**) but assembled in "*an upper room,*" with "*the doors shut for fear of the Jews.*"—[4]**Waiting for that promised day.** [Acts i, 5]: "*Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*"

V.

[1]**On thee came . . . an unconsumed flame.** [Acts ii, 3, 4]: "*Cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*" The flame is understood by the Church to symbolize her faith and the doctrine which flows from it (represented perpetually by the lighted candles), offering light to a darkened world. This is unconsumed and unconsumable, remaining the same yesterday, today and forever.—[2]**on thy . . . hand.** This is a conceit of MANZONI not easy to explain. The sacred text, as above, will certainly bear this interpretation, but why the original and subtle Author preferred thus to deviate from the conception universal, as far as I know, at once with commentators and artists, every one is at liberty to conjecture for himself.—[3]**a signal.** [Is. xlvi, 6]: "*I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*"—[4]**on the mountain.** [Micah iv, 1]: "*The mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and people shall flow unto it.*"—[5]**upon thy lips the fountain Opened of redeeming grace.** [S. John xiv, 26]: "*The Comforter . . . shall teach you all things.*" [Matt. xxviii, 19, 20]: "*Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.*"

VI.

[1]**As the swift returning light . . . Waking varied colors bright.** In this extraordinary simile of the miracle of the gift of tongues [Acts ii, 4] the commentators call upon us to note: 1st, how the idea of the descent from heaven with a rapidity almost inconceivable is common to the two images; 2d, how exquisitely the variety of the colors corresponds to the multiplicity of the idioms; and to go further, how the colors are not in the bodies but in the added light, which is itself composed of the many simple rays which we call the seven colors; and moreover that which appears a color is only a single part of the light which different bodies variously reflect absorbing the rest; and this operation of reflecting is that to which the Poet alludes in the term **Waking.** —[2]**Each in his own idiom heard.** [Acts ii, 6]: "*The multitude came together . . . and every man heard them speak in his own language.*" The unique propriety of the comparison continues in this that the light descending as *one* is decomposed in investing the bodies, and being *reflected differently* by each of them, shows a variety of colors in each; and so the word of the apostles, issuing *one* from their mouth, had the quality of *changing* in the ears of different peoples and manifesting itself in the diverse forms of their languages. The harmony between the **colors** and the **voices,** it is also remarked, may be carried even further, inasmuch as the former may be called the exterior *appearance* of things, and the latter, the exterior *manifestation of the truth* descending as an instructor of the soul. MANZONI delights in such and similar subtleties.

VII.

[1]**Pagan men etc.** Imaginary address of the apostles [Acts ii, 4–6] to the "*multitude* who *came together . . . out of every nation under heaven.*"—[2]**Opening now etc.** The enormous power and most honorable agency of

Christian motherhood is set by the Poet co-ordinate with the preaching of the Word in the redemption of man and the regeneration of the world. Compare 1 Tim. ii, 15:—"*She shall be saved* [obtain salvation] *in* [Greek διά, through the benefit of] *child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*"

VIII.

[1]**A deposit for the Lord.** Let those blush who selfishly decline the duty. To a tender allusion, as pure as beautiful, the Poet connects the idea of a new maternal faith *willingly working out* with the HOLY SPIRIT the spiritual revolution of the coming generations. Exalted, blessed, Divinely offered opportunity and office of Christian mother!

IX.

[1]**To the poor . . . Heirship etc.** The Poet consoles the sighs of the slave-mother with the thought that the day of slavery will end; that Christ has redeemed all alike; united all under the same law of love; called all alike co-heirs with Him, being adopted children of the same, His own Father. So the apostle [Gal. iv, 7]: "*Thou art no more a servant, but a son, and . . . an heir of God through Christ.*" [Rom. viii, 17]: "*Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.*"—[2]**And on every child of Eve etc.** [Gal. iii, 28]: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond, nor free . . . for ye are one in Christ Jesus.*" The commentators applaud this stanza, as the most beautiful, or one of the most beautiful of the Hymn.

X.

[1]**Liberty before unknown.** [S. John viii, 32]: "*The truth shall make you free.*" Alluding directly and mainly, no doubt to moral and spiritual freedom; from enslaving habits and tempers; from useless and profane ceremonies of

worship; from bondage to false teachings and hereditary superstitions; from the dread of death and of the unknown future beyond;—but, also, indirectly, though no less really and happily even to civil and political liberty inevitably following in the spread of Christian civilization which stands for the just and gentle law of Christ which, though still falling far short of its standard and aim, has in fact ever since the apostles' day been sending down the ages an ever-spreading stream of elevating and freeing influences across the whole modern history of humanity.—[2]**Speak the heavens.** A poetical exaggeration in meaning and in formation not unlike the common phrases: 'high as heaven,' 'clear as noon-day' etc.—[3]**nations new.** I. e., become Christian from pagan. —[4]**Conquests new.** I. e., Christianizing changes which are fruits of the preaching of the Gospel.—[5]**glory won,** in struggles of moral heroism and martyrdom.—[6]**Virtue fairer,** because manifested in the higher character acquired and in a 'bravery' of a higher quality than that of arms, or of Pagan civilization.—[7]**Peace new-born etc.** So Christ says [S. John xiv, 27]: "*My peace* [such as He possessed] *I give unto you; not as the world giveth,*" [i. e., temporarily, now giving, now taking it away, but everlasting and imperturbable, whether by fears, or flatteries, or the delusive charms of the passing world] *give I unto you.*

XI.

[1]**O prevailing SPIRIT.** Compare [Rom viii, 26]: "*The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*"—[2]**bald Haiti.** The adjective must be understood as referring to the rocky seacoast and the many lofty, barren interior mountain tops, since the soil of the island is excessively fertile, the vegetation infinitely varied, and the production luxuriant beyond expression.—[3]**joined into one,** the diverse multitudes of which the Church universal is composed, the men themselves, body, soul and spirit, con-

verted, by the HOLY SPIRIT, into one single, longing, palpitating heart in prayer—one of MANZONI's novel and boldly subtle conceits. It is also one of the Poet's later corrections, he having written first: 'But of one single heart in Thee.' Had he not, perhaps, in mind, when making the change, the words of Christ [S. John xvii, 21]: "*That they all may be one*, AS THOU, FATHER IN ME AND I IN THEE"—the absolute oneness of the Godhead? At all events, the change brings out more fully the new love between the members of the world-wide family of Christ effected by the Paraclete who is the Spirit of love.

XII.

[1]**Divine reward, Thyself who wins.** God said to Abraham [Gen. xv, 1]: "*I will be thy shield, thy exceeding great reward.*" MANZONI enriches the thought by adding that the DIVINE SPIRIT become conqueror by His grace, in the combats of the human soul with the forces of evil, will be Himself a Divine recompense to men for the victory won.

XIII.

[1]**Come as Love.** So DANTE often calls the Paraclete, Love, or the first Love. But it is to be observed that MANZONI does not use the word here in the vocative case. He does not mean to say, 'come THOU who art LOVE,' but 'come by Thy loving gifts, by Thy loving power'; and the thought is pursued through the next two stanzas.—[2]**the final day,** the day of death.—[3]**gifts Thy grace disposes.** So S. James [i, 17]: *Every good gift . . . cometh down from the Father of lights.*

XIV.

[1]**Bloom outspread.** It is noticeable that the Poet does not deny, absolutely, that without the light of the sun the flower would lift its top, but not a bloom developed in a glorious splendor of colors. The reference to the charming

qualities of the truly developed Christian life, e. g., humility, charity, faith, hope, etc., all the graces of the SPIRIT, the *beauties of holiness*, is too obvious to need remark. Compare Ps. cx, 3: "*The people shall be willing in the day of Thy power in the beauties of holiness* [multitudinous as the myriad drops of dew] *from the womb of the morning.*" —[2]**Tireless commissary.** An epithet here as ingenious as beautiful, having allusion to the term **Nourish** in the preceding stanza.

XV.

[1]**Fall a whirlwind, etc.** Notable here is the ingenious and beautiful handling of the metaphor of the "*rushing mighty wind,*" [Acts ii, 2] by which the proper influences of the HOLY SPIRIT were first manifested to the apostles. It is the same HOLY SPIRIT who calms and comforts the obedient and trusting, who also sends into the trembling souls of the obdurate and unbelieving remorse and the terrors of a "*judgment to come.*" [Acts xxiv, 25].

XVI.

[1]**The poor . . . to heaven, etc.** Observe how after the cure of the humiliations and the haughtiness of the soul, the Poet turns to the necessities of the body.—[2]**to his own.** Compare the words of Christ [S. Lu. vi, 20]: "*Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*"—**his LIKE**[3]. Compare [S. Lu. ix, 58] the words of Christ: "*Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*"—[4]**Wearing smiles etc.** Compare [2 Cor. ix, 7]: "*God loveth a cheerful giver.*"—[5][Matt. vi, 2]: "*When thou doest alms, do not sound a trumpet . . . . . let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.*"—**acceptance makes.** "*Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly.*"

XVII.

[1]**Breathe into the ineffable smile.** This and the succeeding stanza, as every one must feel, compose, by invocations which touch the conditions of either sex and of every age in life, from the womb to the gate of heaven, a stupendously appropriate and complete conclusion to the vast circuit of solemn thought which has been traversed in this ingenious and powerful Hymn. Perhaps it would not be easy to define precisely, in prosaic terms, how much the Poet meant to include in this petition. It seems clear to me that, at the least, it was *the effect on us*, the beholders, for which he prays. I. e., that we, looking upon the *angelic* picture, before earthly passions and griefs and sins have begun to be written on those infantile faces, may be inspired, as by an effluence of the HOLY SPIRIT (reflected from them) with a sentiment and impulse toward the guilelessness of infancy, which our LORD declared to be among the necessary qualities in the character of children of God. [Matt. xviii, 3]: "*Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" As to the word **ineffable,** it is curious to note that the Poet wrote it so at first; afterward substituted *innocent;* but finally, as if this did not sufficiently carry the *heavenly* meaning, restored the rejected **ineffable.**—[2]**hidden.** It may well be understood not only of the cloistered (though, doubtless, the Poet had these chiefly in mind), but as well of others, who for whatever reason have renounced marriage, living in the world, unknown to the world, in a state of chastity and holiness. In either case the beautiful delicacy in the repetition of **hidden** is equally applicable. It may be said, also, that virginity itself is a treasure hidden *in the heart* of its owner yielding a perennial and hidden joy.—[3]**Innocent bliss.** Compare pages 16 and 26 of Biographical Preface.—**Faith and consecrated love.**[4] Conjugal fidelity unshaken, connubial bliss hallowed by the spirit of heaven! How beautiful, how entrancing to every

imagination! How diametrically opposed to broken vows, parted lives, and now so often, infamous word, *horribile dictu!* divorce, i. e., 'consecutive concubinage,' legalized by some so-called Christian states.

XVIII.

[1]**Glow of ardent youth.** In one of the ecclesiastical hymns, the HOLY SPIRIT is called 'the moderation of passion's heat [*in aestu temperies*].—**self-confidence,** the daring of unbelief.—[2]**plans of truth,** all the just undertakings of the mature manhood's mind and heart and hand.—[4]**glory holiness doth paint.** [5]Compare [Prov. xvi. 31]: "*The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.*" Figure allied also to the *aureole* of Ecclesiastical painting.—[6]**Brighten the wandering gaze etc.** The commentators call attention here to the exquisite lines of Virgil describing the dying Dido [Aen. iv, 691 *et seq.*]:

> . . . *oculisque errantibus alto*
> *Quaesivit coelo lucem: ingemuitque reperta.*
> . . . . . .
> *Dilapsus calor, atque in ventos vita recessit.*

> [With wandering eyes she sought the light
> Of heaven; and found, groaned at the sight.
> . . . . . .
> The mortal chill upon her drew
> And to the winds her spirit flew.]

VIRGIL indeed, with supreme artistic beauty paints the death of the body, MANZONI the transition of the spirit. The eyes of the moribund saint wander, indeed, trembling and uncertain at the last moment, but even then they gleam with the joy of the soul comforted by the hopes of immortality. —[6]**The dying visions of the saint.** What VIRGIL, possibly, had a clouded glimpse of, MANZONI under the light of Christianity has clearly set forth with this sparkling sublimity.

THE NAME OF MARY

THE NAME OF MARY

Treating of a mortal, however sacred, however exalted among human beings, in a comparison with the foregoing Hymns which had direct relations with the God-man Himself, this Hymn must by the nature of things be pitched in a certain manner upon a lower key. This circumstance, or necessity, has opened the way for much conflicting criticism and much faint praise, particularly over certain stanzas which lack, it is claimed, the needed lyric fire; while on the contrary it is also claimed by other and equal critics that just herein lies its propriety, its naturalness, its unaffected excellence. Certainly it is of all the most peaceful, simple, soft in tone and to those who embrace her cult, tender, touching, inspiring.

"The Poet," says a devoted commentator[1], "completes his role here with fine zeal, with a wonderful arrangement and fusion of conceits. In the images used here and clothed with forms which seem so unstudied and in some places humble almost to contempt, you feel a breeziness that refreshes you and implants in your soul virtuous affections and a reverent trust; you feel not that which MANZONI him-

[1]L. Venturi.

self has called 'the dancing of a passionate hurricane,' but the soft voice of a word[1] which the heart is glad to learn and repeat, a zephyr of virginal purity, a new understanding of love."

The term *Name* is taken here in its most pregnant and wide-reaching sense. It includes the whole ecclesiastical doctrine of Her nature, character, elevation, work, power, distinction, glory, renown. It involves, of course, Her especial relations to each member of humanity with the corresponding sentiments and emotions which are the fruit of these relations in individual hearts and which are voiced in the worship of the Church universal.

ARGUMENT.—After the pastoral *exordium* describing the visit of the allotted Mother of the Messiah to the coming mother of the Forerunner, who, informed by prophetic vision, bowed in reverence before that exalted vessel of Divine Motherhood, the Poet proceeds to emphasize the solemn loveliness of that sacred dignity and to exult in the actual universality of its adoration. Then, more at large, he dwells on the affection and faith, on the confidence and comfort which She awakens—of the child frightened by the dark, of the sailor in the terrors of the storm, of the despised young girl overwhelmed in her griefs—taken as symbols of the sources and series, of the occasions and consolations which are attached to Her offices of power and love. These sorrows and their relief through Her sympathy suggest the sorrows of MARY herself and succeeding them Her joys, Her praises, Her everlasting renown. The Hymn closes with a touching call on faithful Israelites to recognize the Princess of their own ancient royalty so exalted now while they have been so

[1]Mother of God.

crushed, so debased, inviting them to return to Her and in company with all the nations of the world take part in the pæan which earth and heaven are sounding, as they salute Her in the words of the Church and of the tremendous address which the Church refers to Her in the SONG OF SONGS.

THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY[1]

I.

The unknown Virgin visits

O'er the hills of the country,[1] went climbing one day,
In the stillness, a Nazarene carpenter's[2] bride,[3]
A visit, unseen,[4] to the cottage to pay[5]
Of a happy old wife[6] in first pregnancy's pride.[7]

II.

Prophetic old Elizabeth and becomes prophetic.

The salute was soft given. The unexpected received
Such reverent[1] welcome as ne'er was addressed
To woman. But she praiséd God and believed,[2]
Saying: '*Yea all nations shall call me the Blessed.*'

III.

Incredulity of the world

By that proud age with what a jest
Such far prediction would be hissed![1]
How slow our counsel, blind our plan!
How false the proud foresight of man!

IV.

Overcome in the faithful

We, witnesses that to Thy rule
The obedient future trimmed its wings,
Preserved for love,[1] born to the school[2]
Of the heavenly things,

V.

By perception of the Truth and

We know it,[1] O MARY, that He,
He alone[2] did His promise maintain
Which He put in the heart of Thee then —
So solemn Thy Name for us is, O MARY;[3]

VI.

Admiration of the Incarnatrix.

MOTHER OF GOD[1] for us voices that token.
Hail blesséd MOTHER! what title so dear,
Highest of all names, has ever been spoken,
Or in loveliness ever came near?

VII.

Preciousness of the Cult.

All hail, blessed MOTHER! in what rudest age
Taught they not this dear name to their sons and their daughters,
To cherish forever, their best heritage?
What mountains so drear?[1] what far lonely waters

VIII.

Universality of its adoption.

Have not heard it invoked? And not only where
Long ages agone Thy fair temples were won,
But regions divinéd by Genoa's son[1]
Thy crowding venerators bear.

IX.

Blooms amidst barbarism.

On what savage plain, or beyond what sea,
A floweret is plucked with a name so wild
It never has known of Thy altars mild
The blesséd acclivity ?[1]

X.

Brightens civilization.

O VIRGIN, O LADY, O thrice-holy LIEGE,
What beautiful names[1] every speech has for Thee!
More than one haughty nation are proudest to be
In Thy gentle tutelage.

XI.

Measures the diurnal epochs of Time.

Rising day, and evening falling,
When noon declares the moiety,
The bronzes hail Thee, ever calling
Pious crowds to honor Thee.

XII.

Refuge in terror.

Thee the fear-struck child[1] invokes
In night's dark watch; to Thee, in pallor,
When danger roars its mighty strokes,
Appeals the trembling sailor.

XIII.

Consolation in secret distresses.

The maiden on thy bosom royal,
In grief despised, her tear deposes,
And to Thee, blesséd MOTHER, loyal,
Her soul's distress discloses,[1]

XIV.

Comfort of the lowly.

Who prayers and plaints alike dost hear[1]
(Unlike the world)[2] of small and great,
Whose woes in its distinctive ear
At cruel odds compete.

XV.

Experienced in Sorrow.

Thou, too, one day hast weeping known[1],
Blessed heart, nor coming day shall cover it
From thoughts of others, or Thine own,
Though ages long run over it.

XVI.

In tender touch with the world.

Thy griefs each day are told with sorrow[1]
In thousand parts; from Thy content
The world, each day, doth gladness borrow
As from a new event[2].

XVII.

Of infinite Dignity from infinite Humility.

Thus first of each renownéd one
Below, the MOTHER OF GOD[1] must be;
Thus was to be raised by the LORD to Her throne
That Hebrew maiden She[2].

XVIII.

Of Israel's faith and fortunes.

O every faithful Israelite!
Ye, fallen to extreme despite!
Ye, by so lengthened wrath contrite[1]!
Comes She not of your rite[2],

XIX.

Of Royal and Prophetic glory.

And David's stock? And ringing
In one resounding swell,
Of her your bards were singing—
Of a Virgin's triumphs o'er Hell;

XX.

General call.

Turn to Her at last your prayers[1],
Ye, also, to Her belong.
Be no nation that forbears
To sing with us Her song:

XXI.

Everlasting AVE.

HAIL THOU, GIVEN THE SECOND[1] NAME!
HAIL SALVATION'S MORNING STAR!
BRIGHT AS THE SUN'S RESPLENDENT FLAME,
AND AWFUL[2] AS THE POMP OF WAR.

NOTES

TO THE NAME OF MARY

NOTES TO THE NAME OF MARY

[1]The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary occurs September 8.

[*The* METRE *of this Hymn in the original is the Sapphic stanza of four lines in alternate penultimate rhymes. It differs, however, from that of its inventress as well as of the Latin users Catullus, Horace etc., in that the first three eleven-syllable lines have not always the cæsura after the fifth syllable (as the perfect Sapphic requires), and the last line which should have seven syllables,* MANZONI *makes in five with the accent on the first, imitating the Adonic*].

(The Hymn was written November, 1812—April, 1813.)

I.

[1]**O'er the hills of the country.** [S. Lu. I, 39]: "*the hill country.*" The critics call our attention to the poetic art of commencing this Hymn in a tone so soft and low compared with the opening of all the others which have preceded. The Poet pictures the lowly country-girl roaming on foot across the country to enhance the coming contrast.—[2]**carpenter's.** [S. Matt. XIII, 55]: "*Is not this the carpenter's son?*"—[3]**bride.** [S. Lu. I, 27]: "*A virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph.*"—[4]**unseen.** This word connotes and completes the first part of the startling contrast with which the Poet opens and will close his song. The unknown young bride who with modest and quiet self-recollection, was climbing *unobserved* the remote and silent hills of Judea *in unattended obscurity*, was she who was to fill, has filled, and will forever fill the universe with her renown.—[5]**to the cottage to pay.** The Jewish priests, except during the week of their official duty in the temple at Jerusalem, dwelt, in distinguished

competency, with their families in the country remote from the metropolis.—[6]**old wife.** [S. Lu. I, 18]: '*my wife is well stricken in years.*'—[7]**in first pregnancy's pride.** [S. Lu. I, 36]: "*This is the sixth month with her who was called barren.*" In the first MS. MANZONI wrote *cognata* [sister-in-law] instead of *pregnante* [pregnant] as the MS. shows that he corrected it. To a distinguished critic who had proposed to the Poet to substitute *parente* [relation] he wrote. 'The *pregnante* hurts you? but your *parente* [relation] does not satisfy me although it comes from *parere* [to bear].'

II.

[1]**Such welcome.** [S. Lu. I, 43]: "*That the Mother of my Lord* [the embryo God-man already growing in Mary's womb] *should come to me.*"—[2]**Praised God and believed, Saying etc.** [S. Lu. I, 45–48]: "*Blessed is she that believed . . . And Mary said: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour . . . from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.'*" This is taken in this Hymn as a prophecy of the universal diffusion of her worship; and the Poet emphasizes the fact that Elizabeth was the first to repeat to Her the salutation of the angel—the *Ave* which the Church and the faithful have been repeating to Her through all the ages since—and the first to hear Her prophetic words.

III.

[1]**Would be hissed.** The Poet again emphasizes the terrible contrast between the obscure and derided beginnings and the worldwide and glorious consummation of the events involved in the prophecy of MARY.

IV.

[1]**Preserved for love.** 'Prevenient grace,' the dogma [S. John, i, 16] of "*grace for grace.*"—[2]**the school of the heavenly things.** The teaching of the Church.

V.

[1]**We know it.** By Christian self-consciousness, result of the enlightenment (*gratia illuminans*, compare DANTE Inf. ii, 97), of the HOLY SPIRIT.—[2]**He alone.** No other could render the future 'obedient' to the prophecy of a lowly and unknown young woman.—[3]**So solemn thy name.** The substance, and seal as it were of the whole Hymn.

VI.

[1]MOTHER OF GOD **for us voices that token.** I. e. 'MARY' means for us the same as 'MOTHER OF GOD,' or when the name of Her who bore the Divine Jesus is spoken, the same sense and sentiment is produced in our souls as if the expression had been Mother of God. This title (in Latin *Dei Genetrix*, or *Deipara*, in Greek θεοτόκος), dates from the earliest times. Though disused, I believe, by all the so-called 'Reformed churches' yet so far as these hold still to the Incarnation of Deity, it is hard to see how the exact and picturesque name can logically be by them condemned.

VII.

[1]**What mountains etc.** The Poet may have had in mind monasteries situated like that at the St. Bernard Pass of the Alps for the rescue of travelers, or those at Mt. Sinai in Arabia and in Greece on Mt. Athos the "Holy Hill" for retirement and study and others in very varied parts and missionary stations among savages in barbarous climes and on islands in remote seas; but I think the whole is rather to be taken together as a strong expression in general terms of the almost universal diffusion of the cult.

VIII.

[1]**Genoa's Son.** Christopher Columbus, from the important relations which he had with Genoa, is commonly known as a Genoese, though born in fact at Savona 10 or 12 miles westward of that city.

IX.

[1]**The blessed acclivity,** the steps of the altars so decorated.

X.

[1]**Beautiful names.** Compare *The Litany of the Blessed Virgin.*

XI.

[1]**The bronzes hail Thee.** An exquisite allusion to the midday *Ave.* Dante [Purg. viii, 4] says of the evening *Ave:*

E che lo nuovo peregrin d' amore
Punge, se ode squilla di lontano
Che paia 'l giorno pianger che si muore.

[The pilgrim's heart anew doth move
And penetrate with thoughts of love
The bell he hears from far away
That seems to mourn the dying day].

XII.

[1]**The fear-struck child . . . the trembling sailor.** "In the bringing together of the two so unlike images — the feeble little boy and the burly sailor — who invoke the dear name in cases so different, is included as it were, the whole intermediate series of invocations which, in the varied conditions and needs of life, are addressed to the Virgin."—[LUIGI VENTURI.]

XIII.

Her soul's distress discloses. As the intensity of the distress increases, increases, also, the intensity of the trusting love. The child and the sailor invoke the name of the Virgin, the agonized girl throws herself into the arms of Her, reveals her most secret sorrows and sobs her griefs into Her bosom.

SANTE-BEUVE, long after he himself passed from religion to scepticism, in his *Essay on William Cowper*, in a note to the well known verses To MARY [Mrs. Unwin], commencing:

> '*The twentieth year is well nigh past,*'

says, with reference to the dreadful melancholy which overclouded so many years of the English Poet's life: "In reading these lines 'To Mary,' which unconsciously turn into a pious litany, we cannot help thinking of that other Mary-in-chief, the Virgin, Her of whom Beatrice, in Dante's Divine Comedy [Inf. ii, 94-96] says:

> . . . '*In high heaven a blessed dame*
> *Besides, who mourns with such effectual grief*
> *That hindrance which I send thee to remove,*
> *That God's stern judgment to her will inclines.*'

It is confidence in that MARY, with her Son all-merciful and powerful, that COWPER lacked. Had his heart been able to admit it, the further devotion would have supported and perhaps preserved him. In a fine passage in the Paradise [c. xxxiii, l. 13-15] DANTE said:

> '*So mighty art thou, Lady, and so great,*
> *That he who grace desireth and comes not*
> *To thee for aidance, fain would have desire*
> *Fly without wings.*' "—[Causeries du Lundi. 1854, xi].

XIV.

[1]**And plaints . . . hear.** The Poet's word [*querele*, complaints] does not involve fault-finding with one's appointed lot, but expression of pain caused by the doing of others. —[2]**Unlike the world,** which distinguishes cruelly between the sorrows of the great and of the lowly—judging of the one kindly, of the other pitilessly.

XV.

[1]**Thou . . . hast weeping known.** Compare the suffrage in the Litany of our Lady of Sorrows: "*Imprint, O Lady, Thy wounds upon my heart, that I may read therein Sorrow and Love; Sorrow, to endure every sorrow for Thee;*

Love, to despise every love for Thee."—LUIGI VENTURI points out the curious coincidence, how the remembrance of the sorrows and of the joys of the Virgin is unified by Her name; since Mary in its Hebrew root has the double signification of '*Sea of Bitterness*' and of '*Exalted woman.*'

XVI.

[1]**Are told with sorrow.** See *The Litany of the Holy Name of Mary* throughout.—**As from a new event.** "This last line alone," wrote a great critic, "would be enough to declare the poet."

XVII.

[1]**Mother of God.** See n. [1] st. vi. [2]**That Hebrew maiden, She.** The critics extol the simplicity of this line comparing it admiringly with the simplicity of **a Nazarene carpenter's bride,** (St. i, ver. 2). DANTE also calls Her, (Par. xxxiii, 2):

Umile ed alta più che creatura.

[Lowly and lofty beyond another creature].

XVIII.

[1]**Contrite.** Observe that this term which besides the usual moral significance, carries the primary meaning of grinding to powder, is used here in both senses, literal as well as figurative, with exquisite efficacy.—[2]**of your rite.** The Poet first wrote 'nation' [gente] which is found in many editions, later substituting *fede* [creed].

XIX.

[1]**Turn to Her etc.** This stanza was inserted by the Poet in his last edition; and the first two lines of the following stanza were then changed to their present form.

XX.

[1]HAIL THOU . . . SECOND NAME. I. e. next after Jesus, which is first of all. [Philip II, 9]: "*God hath given* HIM *a name which is above every name.*"—[2]AND AWFUL. [Song of Solomon VI, 10]: "*Who is She that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners?*" The Catholic Doctors have always understood this as referring to the Blessed Virgin.

INTRODUCTION

TO

IL CINQUE MAGGIO

NAPOLEONIC ODE

INTRODUCTION TO IL CINQUE MAGGIO.

This Ode of awful sublimity, this stupendous Elegy over a fact that has not its equivalent in the political history of all time, ancient or modern, is compressed into eighteen stanzas, each of six swift-running lines. Each of these stanzas, or couplets of stanzas, is a complete chapter; and each chapter completes a certain definite circuit of the tremendous story; which story again is divided into four component parts, each part comprising, within its own horizon, one distinct aspect of the great survey.

This wonderful production, named simply *Il Cinque Maggio* [the fifth of May], date of the death of Napoleon I, many have wished to call Manzoni's poetical masterpiece; a claim disputed only by the *Inni Sacri* [Sacred Hymns] which hold the advantage of a theme grander still and of an expansion five times greater in quantity.

On the other hand, the religious coloring of the *Sacred Hymns*, deeply tinged in mysticism, naturally, at first, limited the taste and appreciation of the great multitude of readers at home and abroad; and it was in fact the unbounded renown of the Napoleonic Ode following them which turned back the eyes of the literary world upon the *Sacred Hymns* already sent out by the great author into the world, almost unnoticed, earlier by six years and more. Beginning from that moment to increase in splendor before the eyes of all, thanks to the awakening glory of this Napoleonic Ode, they at last challenged the foremost rank in his poetical work.

An undisputed claim also to stand, as poetry, in the first rank with these have the three other short productions written as choruses in the dramas *Adelchi* and *Carmagnola;* namely, the *Battle of Maclodio,*[1] *The Awakening,*[2] *The Death of Ermengarda.*[3] The first two for substance and

[1]At the end of the II Act of Carmagnola. [2]That is of the Italians against the French under Charlemagne. At the end of III Act of Adelchi. [3]At the end of i scene of IV Act of Adelchi.

argument, appealing rather to the political sentiment of the Italian race, have a less cosmopolitan voice and interest. The last is indeed a heart-melting Elegy over the lovely, innocent, cruelly repudiated Lombard wife of Charlemagne, and full of human interest and overwhelming power.

However the controversy, not very important, surely, may or may not be decided, as to which of the great creations of the supreme Lombard poet shall bear the rank of Manzonian masterpiece, it is certainly an imposing and significant fact that of all the rest the Napoleonic Ode had the most extraordinary birth, the most extraordinary immediate reception and has been the battleground of the most extraordinary criticisms ever since its sudden leap into the world like Minerva full armed from the brain of Jove.

In the early morning of the 17th of May, 1821, the Poet, seated on a bench in the garden of his favorite villa *Brusuglio* a few miles outside of Milan, was enjoying the lovely landscape and the refreshing breeze of spring when some one sought

him bringing the *Milan Gazette* of the previous day. The journal contained an announcement of the death of Napoleon at St. Helena on the 5th. In a letter, years afterward, to CESARE CANTÙ, MANZONI says: "His death gave me a shock,[1] as if some component element had passed away from the world and I was taken with a madness of talking about him and had to throw out that Ode."

He immediately withdrew to his study and wrote to the music of military marches, keeping his wife at the pianoforte playing and endlessly repeating the stirring music for two days, during which the first draft was accomplished. On the third day, silent and alone, he retouched the stanzas, and never again did he apply the file though pursued by infinite suggestions and criticisms.[2]

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[1] The notice of the rout of NAPOLEON at Waterloo, six years before, had so shocked MANZONI as to leave upon him a nervous trembling and liability to fainting, which followed him throughout his long life; on account of which he never afterward went abroad unaccompanied.

[2] The original manuscript of these two days' furious labor, preserved in the museum at Milan which bears his name, shows the nervous rapidity with which it was written, and the multitudinous alterations and obliterations of swift and vibrating thought.

The reason of this disregard he thus explains in the above-named letter to CANTÙ: "After the three days of convulsion in composing the trifle [*corbelleria*], though I saw the defects of it, I felt so knocked up and such a need of getting out of it and putting it away, that I sent it to the censor. He counseled me not to publish it; but from his own office came out the first manuscript copies of it." This curious fact was the result, in part, of a slight artifice of MANZONI himself, who sent two copies to the Censor's office, reckoning that very likely some one of the employés would carry off one of them, and so the poem would get abroad. Precisely this happened, and within 24 hours afterward, all Milan was reading it without the Poet being able to be blamed for it.

Almost immediately GOETHE in some way not now known obtained a copy of the MS. and printed[1] of it a translation of his own ac-

[1]In the Review *Ueber Kunst und Alterthum* [On Art and Antiquity] Oct.—Nov. 1822. It was a paper which he had read at the Court of Weimar on the 8th of August previous.

companied by a critique abounding in lavish praise. Introduced by such a hand it flew like wildfire into every part of Christendom and was translated into nearly all the languages and dialects of Europe.[1] The first printed Italian edition was that of Lugano,[2] with the text on one side and on the other a translation in Latin hexameters by PIETRO SOLETTI, under the pseudonym of *Erifante Eritense.* Although prohibited by the censorship and confiscated by the police wherever found, the verses were diffused with great rapidity and eagerly read wherever Italian was spoken. Among all the great hymns which the fall and death of Napoleon occasioned, at home and abroad, of Beranger, of Lamartine, even of Wordsworth and Byron, in the temper of Englishmen, and of a legion of others with which Europe began immediately to echo,[3] the surpassing number of translations securely attested that

[1]MESCHIA has collected translations of it in 27 languages.

[2]It has no date, but 1822 is assumed from an appended letter of MANZONI to the translator bearing date of 20th June, 1822.

[3]Compare the last two lines of stanza iii.

the *Cinque Maggio* of MANZONI was judged by the great world to be the most effective of all to interest and satisfy the living and to send down the great memory to posterity.

The unique creation quickly became and still remains a shining mark for literary criticism, both captiously adverse and idolatrously laudatory. "Everything reasonable and unreasonable," says MAMIANI, "has been written and written over again about the *Cinque Maggio*, pointing out here and there a word and a phrase, which is like finding a defective shoe in a marvellous painting of Apelles." Every stanza, almost every line, in this regard like Gray's immortal Elegy, has been pierced with objurgatory and more or less pedantic arrows. Of the infinite number and variety of condemnations and proposed improvements MANZONI accepted none. But the various errors which had crept into the unauthorized editions in which the Ode first appeared, in the grand edition of his poetry of 1840, the Author endeavored to correct.

One reason, certainly, of this superabundant criticism was a natural fruit of the innate spirit of freedom which was manifested in all the great Lombard's words and acts—a boldness which in his literary work purposely overstepped the fossilized classic rules, in obedience to his own later taste and judgment, and in the result made him high priest of the new *romanticism.*

Another cause less legitimate and hardly pardonable was, often, a failure in the critics thoroughly to understand or appreciate the subtlety of the great Poet's great ideas, the profoundly and purposely veiled and often pregnant signification of his words, the frequent novelty, and, so to speak, the new music of the discords of his numbers.

But all the same, as it has been of the great English Elegy, the world of readers and the greater critics generally have read and felt and enjoyed and careless alike of ignorant, or prejudiced, or overwrought criticisms, have voted the

Ode a ranking place among the very highest poetry of Italy, the supreme work of DANTE ALIGHIERI alone excepted.

To give a few specimens of this disagreement in the upper heavens of criticism in Italy herself. Says BENEDETTO PRINA: "The *Cinque Maggio* beyond a Pindaric Ode, may be called an Epic poem, a marvelous drama, developed in 18 stanzas; and might almost be likened to one of those stupendous pictures such as is the Vision of Ezechiel, before which we feel ourselves raised to an almost dizzy height whence the astonished gaze sees the earth disappear below while the horizon enlarges into boundless expanse."

PIETRO GIORDANI contemporary and bilious literary dictator (an Italian Francis Jeffrey), delivers himself thus: "I do not dispute on the argument; every one says what he pleases. But it seems to me as to the phrases that sometimes he does not know how to say what he wishes and sometimes he does not know what he wishes to say."

Says the late brilliant Neapolitan professor, FRANCESCO DE SANCTIS: "After a magnificent prelude *a la grande orchestra* which introduces you after the manner of a ball into the highest regions of art, enlarging the proportions beyond the true, indeed, but which seem natural in so great and so sudden an excitement of fancy, comes the history of the Hero in nine stanzas, each of which, by the vastness of the perspective, is a little world and an impression of it comes to you like that from a pyramid. At each stanza the statue changes point of view yet is always colossal. The swift and penetrating eye of inspiration devours the spaces, groups the years, fuses the events, gives you the illusion of the infinite. By a treatment wholly of perspective the proportions are enlarged into the greatest clearness and simplicity of expression. The images, the impressions, the sentiments, the outlines in general in that vastness of horizon, are magnified and acquire boldness of color as well as of dimension. You find the life of the great man

condensed in epic strokes, in gigantic antitheses, in unexpected comparisons, in original constructions. He stands before you in his warlike doings, in his inner sentiments, in his vicissitudes, in his power, in his fall, in his memories—a mighty work of concentration in which the events and the centuries dash on as if crowded and dragged by a superior force in those impatient and galloping lines hardly reined in by a few scattered rhymes."

Says the learned commentator, the Abbot LUIGI VENTURI: "This Ode, in the midst of some fugitive defects, that escaped in the boiling fecundity of his genius, has all the freshness, spontaneity, and felicitous daring of a composition almost improvised. Every stanza is one act of the great drama and in the swift flashings of so many great images which are grouped around the majestic figure of the Hero, all is ordered with the finest art and lighted up with a wonderful brilliancy."

Says the Pisan critic, GIUSEPPE PUCCIANTI: "The contemporary history is seen by the Poet in its very true aspect, and at the same time in one very ideal and hence very poetical. He does not gather around the subject ideas poetical indeed but which are extrinsic to it; he regards it, instead, in its own essential verity and takes of it a keen birdseye view; so that he sees in it the sublime poetry which it contains; and as he sees it himself such exactly he makes the mind's eye of the reader to see it. The life, the undertakings, the glories, the misfortunes of the '*Man of Fate*' are represented in all their historic truth and reality, but at the same time with that rapidity, that burst of genius, which among a thousand particulars sagely gathers only the greatest and most significant and paints these with such images as set them out in all their greatness."

On the contrary, again, the abbot CESARE CANTÙ, a critic not to be suspected of prejudice or of incompetence, declares that "this Ode of Manzoni is unequal to his others."

Thereupon, to CANTÙ replies the scholar, poet and statesman, TERENZIO MAMIANI: "*Il Cinque Maggio* stands alone and unique in modern literature, as stood alone and unique the person of whom it treats. An entire book would not afford too much room to indicate one by one the substantial reasons why the Italian poet writing on that dread theme was superior to all those of other nations not excluding BERANGER. After such an example, I do not think any one will hesitate to agree that in moral elevation is a great foundation of the lyric art. It has seemed admirable to all Europe to see MANZONI ascend, as it were, an observatory of the world and surrounded by the purest and calmest atmosphere discover from there and measure with mind in quiet and a most piercing glance the whole *epopœia* of the 'fated man,' seeking rather the secret motives, than the external splendors, confronting all with the eternal principles of righteousness and with the hopes and gracious comforts of religion.

It must be confessed that the Author was never satisfied with his work. In the year that it was composed and was flying through the world with applauses, the Poet with his habitual self-depreciation wrote in a letter to his close friend, GIAMBATTISTA PAGANI: "Seeking the reasons for the strange reception of that composition, I find two very potent ones in the argument and in the clandestine publication; perhaps a third in a certain obscurity, vicious in itself, but suited to set afoot the supposition of recondite and profound thoughts where there was nothing but the deficiency of perspicuity."

One is reminded by this self-depreciation of its coincidence with a similar sentiment of GRAY over the extraordinary reception of the *Churchyard Elegy*. DR. GREGORY in a letter to the Poet BEATTIE says: "GRAY told me, with a good deal of acrimony, that the Elegy owed its popularity to the subject and that the public would have received it as well if it had been written in prose." And DR. BEATTIE himself says: "Of all

the English poets of this age MR. GRAY is most admired and I think justly, yet there are but few, comparatively speaking, who know any thing of his but the *Churchyard Elegy* which is by no means the best of his works." So true it is that

> 'The public taught against its will
> Stands of the same opinion still.'

It is curious to observe that among the three most exalted contemporaneous poets of Italy, CESAROTTI and MONTI had celebrated the *triumphs* of NAPOLEON; but when he died, the former was no longer in life, the latter was silent, MANZONI alone spoke. On this fact TOMMASEO makes the acute remark that "MONTI who had sung:

> '*The rivals of Buonaparte live in the sky*,'

survived him seven years; but the sepulchre seemed to him a less poetical subject than the throne."

However its relative place among the author's works may be fixed and however the conflicting

criticisms settled, this is certain and obvious; that the Ode is not only absolutely unique in Italian, but is one of the grandest and most extraordinary in all languages and in all time, in the following respects: 1st, The theme of fact is one of the greatest, strangest, most stirring the world has ever seen. 2d, Every conceit introduced in the Poem is important and great. 3d, The figures of speech are generally unusual and very striking. 4th, The condensation is at once most marvelous in degree, yet in result always felicitous. 5th, The words, simple and musical, are often heavily pregnant, always full of dignity. 6th, Elegant unity of the *tout-ensemble* like a marvelous picture of Apelles, leaves a clarified and unforgetable impression on the mind and in the heart a profound emotion. 7th, Finally, the mechanical structure of the stanzas and the whole architecture of the poem, like one of the small but exquisite monumental palaces in the Cemetery of Naples, is the consummate workmanship of a poet-artist who knew

profoundly how and in this effort laid out all his capacity both to enchant the imagination and to stir the emotions of the reader by the various and utmost enginery of lyric verse.

FRANCESCO D'OVIDIO has given the comprehensive word when he says: "You shall be able with the most subtle, the most refined, the most ireful critical discontent, to go around that monument and note there as many wrinkles in style as there are lines, to discover as many imperfections till now undiscovered as there are ideas; you will exercise thus your own genius and sharpen that of the others, but the monument, however so pecked and riddled, will continue to tower up on its solid base in all its own proud height."[1]

In comparing the general argument of the Ode and the judgments of MANZONI on Napoleon I with the very different spirit and temper of Wordsworth and Byron on the same theme, it must of course be borne in mind that from his

[1] Discussioni Manzoniane.

name, his birth, his mother tongue, the successes and glories of Napoleon were not only Latin, but in a sense Italian; and how grateful the Lombard and Piedmontese patriots of that day had been to the invincible Emperor for driving back the intolerable Austrian tyranny from the north and the establishment of the first "Kingdom of Italy" (*Regno Italico*) with Milan for its capital; which his fall necessarily undid, bringing back with a still more cruel grip the iron rule of the former despots. In view of which and not a few other reliefs and supports that accrued to the inhabitants of the oppressed Peninsula from gracious acts of the great conqueror, so reserved and acute a writer as D'OVIDIO says: "It is very difficult to determine whether the sum of good done by him [Napoleon I] is really greater than that of the evil."

Yet neither blindness to facts, nor sympathy with misdoing can on any account be attributed to MANZONI who has nowhere expressed his affection, or approbation even, for the character of

Napoleon as *a man*, as *a member of the human family*, only a sentiment of wonder and heart-shaking astonishment at the 'fateful' phenomenon. On the contrary, in a letter to CANTÙ he wrote: "What shall I say to you? He [Napoleon] was a man whom it was necessary one should admire, without being able to love him[1]—the greatest of tacticians, the most tireless of conquerors, with the highest qualities of the statesman, knowing how to anticipate and knowing how to do."

In addition to this, it must be distinctly observed that in this Ode MANZONI is the poet, consciously and professedly *poetizing for the intellectual satisfaction and enjoyment of cultivated men*, not the chronicler or moralist who is analizing events for the exact instruction of stu-

[1]On two occasions at least MANZONI in his youth had seen the great warrior, with what emotions we know. For the first occasion, see note (a) to Stanza XIII. For the second time he had been filled with disgust and horror as he once narrated to CANTÙ, when in 1805 he saw him crossing the *Place du Carrousel* returning from having 'assisted' in *Nôtre-Dame* at the *Te Deum* for the victory of Austerlitz, "in full bloom of pride and envy, with the air of a tragedian, as if he were addressing blandishments to his enemies which were hampering them, or brutalities which were terrifying them."

dents of history or professors of economics. Apropos to this is a remark of MANZONI preserved in one of his letters to FAURIEL written about this date: "Historic narration," he says, "is forbidden to poetry which does not wish to die, because the exposition of facts has, through the reasonable curiosity of men, a particular attraction which is changed into a feeling of disgust when poetic inventions are introduced, which also then seem childish. But to gather the characteristic traits of an epoch, to develop them in an action, to profit by history without setting one's self into making competition with it, without the pretense of doing that which it does much better, here is that which seems to me reserved to poetry and that which in its turn it alone can do."[1]

But leaving out of view the natural prejudices of the poets in both directions and confining the comparison merely to majesty of thought and dignity and beauty of poetic expression, take the

[1]Cited by Sainte-Beuve.

proud, prosy, prolix lines and coarse metaphors of a poet laureate who with "safe outrage" could write of a dreaded foe:

"*That soul of Evil—which from Hell let loose,*" etc.

And of his fall, the almost sacrilegious figure:

. . . . . "*The hideous rout*
Which the blest angels from their peaceful clime
Beholding, welcomed with a choral shout."

Or the jingling spite of the terrible rhymer:

"*Thanks for that lesson—it will teach*
To after-warriors more,
Than high philosophy can preach
And vainly preached before."

Confront with these barkings and sputterings of hate, the lofty solemnity, the majestic parsimony of speech, the startling novelty in metaphor of MANZONI'S Ode, the sublime purity of its spirit, clean of every expression of hatred, or envy, or any form whatever of malicious and brutal passion, dwelling in the celestial calm of moral, even mystic contemplation upon the profounder realities and wonders of existence.

Then, apart even from the mellifluous flow of Manzonian numbers, whether rhymed or unrhymed — so inimitable and indescribable, so precious to the Italian ear, absolutely untranslatable — can it be denied that in those peerless qualities is the foundation of a sure immortality, the certainty that it is indeed "a song that will not die," but live applauded in the minds and mouths of men, when the stormy heats and hatreds of laureate enemies and thundering paganizing bards are sepulchred in dusty foglios on crowded shelves, or lie in state undisturbed in gilded and tapestried feminine *boudoirs?*

IL CINQUE MAGGIO

IL CINQUE MAGGIO

"O reader, you will not find in the *Cinque Maggio* that choice propriety which you admired in the *Inni Sacri;* but you will find there the inspiration of a powerful lyric which will compel you to follow the Poet in the lofty flights of his fancy. You will find there the figure of the Hero, sketched in broad michaelangelesque strokes, with historic fidelity; but with that poetic ideal which seeks the spirit in the action and the universal in the particular, you will see it presented before you splendidly majestic in its glories and sublimely pitiful in its misfortunes."—L. VENTURI.

"It is a lyric which makes us feel once more the values and the deficiencies of improvisation. Certainly it is the fruit of an inspiration warmer, livelier, broader, and bolder of flight than that which was MANZONI's wont. The impetuosity there is more frequent and vivacious, the form often more vigorous and more eloquent in the vastness and vagueness of the poetical horizon. But the crowding together of the ideas and the impetuous belching of them forth make the poetry fragmentary, failing in many places of a connection I will not say apparent but even ideal. So that each of the stanzas lives its own too individual life."—VITTORIO FERRARI.

IL CINQUE MAGGIO.

Argument. — In this stupendous creation, of matter thoroughly philosophical, of form absolutely poetical, of execution condensed to the last degree, the Poet has still further adopted the rhetorical order of the oration. 1st, The Prelude, calling us to note that late and almost unwillingly he has felt forced to take up his pen by the display of the world-astounding phenomenon at last complete. 2d, The development, marvelously brief, of the extraordinary external facts. 3d, An imaginary picture of the Conqueror's inner life. 4th, The assumed mercy of God on this penitent archangel, for the glory of the Christian Faith.

THE FIFTH OF MAY

PRELUDE.

I.

He[1] has passed[2]. As stark and still,
When the mortal gasp was given,
Startling Tidings. Lay the unremindful spoil[3]
Whence so great a soul was riven;
So the Earth, smitten and dazed
At the announcement, stands amazed[4],

II.

Silent, pondering on that last
Fateful hour[1]; nor, gazing back
Awe of the World. In fearful wonder o'er the past,
Kens she[2] when with such a track[3]
By mortal foot shall yet be pressed
The dust upon her bloody breast[4].

III.

My Genius[1] saw him on a throne
In flashing splendor, nothing said;
Poet's Reserve. The blandishments of fortune flown,
He fell[2], he rose, again was laid;
While thousand voices then awoke,
Mingled with these, no word[3] he spoke;

IV.

Virgin of end-serving praise[1]
And the coward's safe outrage[2],
Startled to write. Shocked by the blot of such a blaze,
He rises now his chance to gage,
Shaking the urn[3], e'en to untie[4]
A canticle which will not die[5].

PROPOSITION OF FACTS.

V.

From Pyramids[1] to heights alpine
Flashed that god's[2] swift lightning-stroke;
Exploits Extraordinary From Manzares[3] to the Rhine
Rapid, crashing thunders broke,
Rolling on from Scylla's sea
Shaking farthest Muscovy.

VI.

Was this glory[1] just and true?—
Sentence waits posterity[2].
Ethical Problem. Bow we to the Highest's view[3],
Willing us in him to see
Stamped a trace more[4] vast and grand
Of His own resistless[5] hand.

VII.

Ecstacies of Painful Joy.

With hurricanes of anxious joy[1],
  Earthquake exploits of wild renown,
A heart in unsubdued annoy
  In slavery[2] gloats upon the crown;
And gains the goal and grasps a prize
'T was madness there to set his eyes.

VIII.

Immense Vicissitudes.

All he tasted; glory growing
  Greater after great embroil[1];
Flight[2]; and victory bestowing
  Palace[3]; and the sad exile[4];
Twice in the dust a victim razed[5],
Twice on the altar victim blazed[6].

IX.

Arbiter of Civilization.

He made a name[1], two centuries, set
  Armed against each other[2] and
To him turned as for their fate,
  Waited a signal of his hand.
He sat between them, hushed them still,
Made arbiter his iron will;

X.

Sentiments of Men.

And[1] disappeared; his empty days[2]
  Mured within that narrow bound[3],
Mark for envy's fiercest rays[4],
  Pity's sympathy profound[5],
Inextinguishable hate[6],
And love unsubdued by fate[7].

ELEGY PROPER.

XI.

His own Reflections.

As on the shipwrecked sailor's head[1]
  The wave is wrapped[2] and weighs him down,
The wave upon whose lofty spread
  His strainéd sight[3] was lately thrown,
Scanning to discern once more
The distant and evading shore;

XII.

Mental Paralysis.

Such on that soul the massy weight
  Of memories descended, when —
How many times! — he would narrate
  What he has been to coming men;
And on the eternal page[1] remained
Fallen the palsied, nerveless hand!

XIII.

Humiliation of Memories.

How oft while day without emprise[1]
  Sank into sepulchral rest[2],
Bent to earth his flashing eyes[3],
  Arms enlaced upon his breast,
He stood; from days of other years
Received the assaults of *souvenirs*[4];

XIV.

Vagaries of the Past.

Reviewed[1] the moving tents of war[2]
  And vanquished ramparts[3] of the foe
And flashing columns gleam afar
  And wavy squadrons charging go
And swift commands impetuous made
And swift obedience displayed.

PÆAN OF IMMORTAL HOPE.

XV.

Divine Mercy.

Ah, now, methinks, in such a strait[1]
  The spirit fell, breathless[2] and riven
By keen despair; but strong and great
  Came a pitying hand[3] from heaven
And into more inspiring air
The desperate transported there;

XVI.

Consolation of Immortal Hope.

Led through the flowery paths of Hope[1]
  To the eternal plains — the meed
Where guerdons bright, supernal ope,
  That loftiest wishes far exceed[2].
Past glory's trump and brightest glare
Are silence and deep darkness there[3].

XVII.

Triumph of Religious Faith.

O thou, fair Immortal! beneficent Faith,
  Accustomed to triumphs, conqueror of death!
This, also, among thy triumphings write;
  Since no prouder greatness, no loftier height
Of earth-born glory that mortals can know
Has come to the shame of Golgotha to bow[1].

XVIII.

Nil de Mortuo.

From these weary[1] ashes, thou[2]
  Words condemning ban;
God, who fells and lashes now
  Lifts and soothes again[3],
On that lonely[4] dying bed
Soft His heavenly presence shed.

NOTES

TO IL CINQUE MAGGIO

NOTES TO IL CINQUE MAGGIO

[*The* METRE *of this Hymn in the original is a stanza of six seven-syllable lines; of which the first four are alternately unrhymed final antepenultimates and rhymed penultimates; the fifth is an unrhymed antepenultimate; while the sixth is bound by the rhyme of the ultimate syllable to the last line of the succeeding stanza.*]

(The Ode was written 17th–19th, July, 1821.)

I.

[1]**He.** The dignity of non-specification. All the world will know who.—[2]**has passed,** the untranslatable *fu* [has been] like the Latin *ille fuit.*—[3]**unremindful spoil,** dead body, regardless of friends and of foes.—[4]**earth . . . amazed.** A beautiful poetical hyperbole meaning of course *the people* of all the world; but compare note [4] stanza II.

II.

[1]**Fateful hour.** So long as the terrible warrior breathed even in restraint the world lived in suspense, death only [the **fateful hour**] could close the uncertain possibilities.—[2]**Kens she.** Compare note [4] of this stanza.—[3]**such a track . . . be pressed.** It has been objected to this expression that 'a track cannot press.' The metonymy, naming the effect for the cause, while leaving the sense perfectly clear, should seem not only poetically permissible, but beautiful and the criticism, like many another made on this stupendous creation, frivolous not to say ridiculous.—[4]**her bloody breast,** i. e. of course of the earth *in its*

proper sense. Above the term was used of the people who inhabit the earth. This use of the same word in a two-fold acceptance in the same connection, though each meaning would be good used singly, is censured as rhetorically vicious. Probably MANZONI would have been the readiest of all to concede that this is technically so, while it lends a vividness to the expression which it is doubtful if the daring Poet could have been persuaded to sacrifice for the sake of a rule of rhetoric. On this temper of MANZONI, compare note [4] stanza VI. Some texts, variant from the autograph, instead of **bloody** [cruenta] read *contested* [contesa]; but how much feebler this reading, every one must see.

III.

[1]**My Genius,** my Muse, a rather curious manzonianism.—**He fell**[2] . . . **was laid,** Leipsic and Elba, the Hundred Days, Waterloo and St. Helena.—[3]*no word he* ['my Genius'] *spoke.* "Although," says DE GUBERNATIS, "we have notice [it was never published] of an anti-napoleonic poem, not cowardly certainly and not outrageous, but written, however, when the Napoleonic colossus was no longer able to strike." [22 April, 1814]. It opened:

'When truth was a crime, and the lie' . . .

In the judgment of FINZI, although the poem was "rather obscure through very covert allusions to the Napoleonic tyranny, nevertheless it does not seem just to impeach the sincerity of MANZONI's proud assertion in the text." The facts stand thus: When Napoleon I (April, 1814), renounced all right to the kingdom of Italy [il regno italico], MANZONI saluted in a brief political poem that state of affairs which seemed to him a beginning of a new and beautiful life for the nation; which hope, veiled by the distress of so great past disorders, he brings out in the poem, which perhaps, rather than antinapoleonic, should be called intensely Italian.

IV.

[1]**Virgin of . . . etc.** CANTÚ narrates that MANZONI had repeated to him specimens almost too disgusting and even blasphemous to write which were current in Paris while Napoleon was in his glory: e. g. 'a prefect declared that *God needed to rest after having created Napoleon*, as after the creation of the world.' 'A senator prayed God to *preserve the throne of Napoleon, if He wished to keep His own.*' 'Another declared *divine the conception of Napoleon* in the womb of Letizia.' 'The clergy publicly announced him as *foretold by the Prophets;* and *applied to him verses of the Psalms*, and said that *France ought to render obedience to him as to God.*—[2]**safe outrage,** safe after his fall.—[3]**Shaking the urn,** a common classical figure indicating an *uncertain* result. Compare among many, Hor. Sat. lib. i, 30.:

> . . . *namque instat fatum mihi triste Sabella*
> *Quod puero cecinit divinâ mŏta anus urna:*
>
> [. . . . for to me my Sabine nurse
> In boyhood prophesied this curse
> She conned it by the shaken urn
> And now it presses in its turn.]

With our Poet here it is equivalent to saying 'to take his chance.'—**to untie**[4], a bold figure, surely, but as beautiful as original. During all the past the Poet has *kept bound* in his soul the 'flying word,' which now at the risk of the lot, he lets loose *to take its chances* for immortality. Compare, also, the Preface to this Ode, page 195.—[5]**will not die.** Quite aside from the mark seems to me the comment of LUIGI VENTURI, endeavoring here gratuitously to shield MANZONI from a charge of presumption, where he claims for the Poet first the poetic license asserted in the well known boast of Horace [Od. III, 30]:

> *Exegi monumentum aere perennius*
> *Quod non . . .*
> *Possit diruere . . . innumerabilis*
> *Annorum series . . .*
>
> [I've reared a column surer than brass to stay,
> Nor rolling years can ever waste away.]

then adds: "MANZONI who, exceedingly modest that he was, called the *Cinque Maggio* a trifle [*corbelleria*] may have intended that his song *will not die* because conjoined with the great memory of Napoleon; but it may even be that he said it in one of those impulses of enthusiasm in which the poet, conscious of his own power, presents himself as it were to the future and talks to posterity."! Manzoni's thought is rather, I should say, merely that he starts to shake the urn for *trying his chance to make a song which will not die*—far enough this from presumptuous egotism.

V.

[1]Here begins the second part or proposition of the Ode with, as FINZI remarks, "one of those geographical outlinings which were in the taste of the Poet who, as far as was consistent with the romanticists [see page 32 of the Biographical Preface and note [1], page 58], is always pleased with classic symmetry. And the verses, the first four at least, express forcibly the *veni, vidi, vici* of the new Cæsar in all Europe, in Africa, in Asia." MESTICA understands that in the first verses of this stanza are indicated the wars of Italy and of Egypt, of Spain, and of Germany, then the later wars of Italy and the expedition to Russia, finally in the fifth and sixth verses, the naval battles fought on the Atlantic ocean and on the Mediterranean and North seas. But perhaps considering MANZONI's habit of repeating the same conceit in different words and figures of speech for the sake of emphasis, it is better to take all together as one composite idea equivalent to a sweeping expression, 'from north to south, from east to west.' The commentators call on us to compare DANTE, Par. VI, 58:

E quel che fe dal Varo insino al Reno . . .
[And what it [Rome] did from Var unto the Rhine . . .].—

[2]**that god's etc.** Compare note [1] stanza IV.—[3]**Manzares,** the little river on the left bank of which Madrid is situated. This stream falls into the Jamara and this into the Tagus.

VI.

[1]**Glory just and true?** Or shall we call it notoriety only? This is peculiarly Manzonian. The always serious, not to say mystic Poet finds himself here suddenly arrested by a solemn and tremendous thought. The stanza has given rise to acres in printed pages of critical discussion. The acute D'OVIDIO says: "To this interrogation has been given, even by warm admirers and sagacious interpreters, a sense recondite not to say insincere, as if the Poet had intended to insinuate that in earthly greatness there never could be true glory; and that this [the true glory] Napoleon had only in as much as he bowed to the Crucified when dying. This is a mistake. . . . It is very difficult to decide whether the sum of the good done by him is greater than that of the evil. So MANZONI, who, yielding to sympathy for the extraordinary man who had so wrought on the imagination and closed his career like a Christian, wrote this in a lively poetic excitement, was certainly natural when, as a moralist, as an historian, as a patriot which he was, he felt the need of making some reserve in the judgment historical and moral which might be brought on Napoleon and of protesting, not to speak of others, to himself even, that at that moment he *felt*, did not judge." To this it has been replied that the epithet insincere is inapplicable whether to MANZONI or to the line to which the critic refers; that for MANZONI there could be no idea of human glory into which did not enter the element of religion; that in the same stanza the query is united with and superposed upon the religious sentiment of bowing to the

view of the Highest; and finally, that throughout the Ode the mystic sentiment by which it was inspired cannot be denied nor concealed. MATTHEW ARNOLD says: "We may well allow with M. RENAN that 'few things are less vain than real glory.' Yes, real glory is a most serious thing, glory authenticated by the Amphictyonic court of final appeal. Long and difficult as may be the process of arriving at the right award, the right award comes at last; the definitive glory rests where it is deserved."—[2]**waits posterity.** I. e. 'I will not enter the conflict of judgments'; quite in harmony with Arnold's words in the last note, 'we are too near to judge safely, we are dazzled by the brilliance, we are inflamed by passion, we are blinded by prejudice, time is necessary and will develop the truth.'—[3]**bow we . . . view,** 'Sure that he was a master genius, we bow, etc.' The general sense of the last four lines of this stanza, which are indeed not so clear as we should like to have them, seems to me to be, that 'He who sent that tremendous captain into the world had in view the impressing on men that their earthly destinies are not (as they are too ready to feel) in their own hands, but that an inscrutable and *irresistible* Providence of His own, operated by human agents and sublunary agencies, overrules all.—[4]**more** vast. I. e. 'than any heretofore impressed.' MANZONI once wrote to his friend PAGANI: "I see that 'more vast' is a vicious expression in that it fails of the second part of the comparison. 'So vast' would, indeed, be more grammatical, but it would be further still from the sense I wished and did not know how to express.'" So he allowed it to stand.—**resistless Hand.** Re-read note [3] of this stanza.

VII.

[1]**Anxious joy,** the quivering madness of a soul which is gloating, in a drunkenness of joy in the execution, upon immense and promising undertakings of which it recognizes

also the momentary and tremendous peril and trembles at measuring the magnitude. From the Napoleonic Poem of MONTI [*Il Bardo della selva nera*, c. vi], VENTURI cites:

> *Fra la premiera genitrice idea*
> *Di perigliosa impresa, ed il momento*
> *Dell' eseguire, l' intervallo è tutto*
> *Fantasmi, e bolle de' pensieri il flutto.*

> [Between the first conceptive thought
> Of perilous designing
> And the moment when its fruit is wrought,
> Dead spectres rise, the fancy toils,
> A flood of torturing worry boils,
> All miseries combining.]

Compare in Byron's Ode:

> "The rapture of the strife
> The earthquake shout of victory
> To thee the breath of life."

In slavery[2], i. e. in painful straits and toils of the mind, while contriving and accomplishing his immense designs — his secret consciousness, his heart of hearts, consuming with the torment of anxiety. The Italian word 'slaves' [*serve*] in passing through the Latin edition of SOLETTI and some of the MS. editions, e. g. that of GOETHE, became 'glows' [*ferve*] but was restored by the Author in his own edition of 1840. The seductive error is retained in some editions still, but observing the contrast designed by the subtle Poet between 'slaving' and "reigning" in the same line, every one will feel the loss in the change.

VIII.

[1]**After great embroil.** E. g. the contentions that resulted in the victories of Marengo (June 14, 1800), one of the most fiercely fought and most glorious of his battles and "which had an immense effect in consolidating his power"; and of Austerlitz (December 2, 1805), "the fruit of a series of scientific and masterly manœuvres, all executed with aston-

ishing accuracy and all crowned with perfect success."—[2]Flight, the disastrous retreat from Russia in 1812, and worse, the rout of Leipsic (October 16, 1813) and of Waterloo (June 18, 1815).—[3]**Palace,** during the first empire (1804-1814) and after Elba the Hundred Days (March 10–June 17, 1815).—[4]**sad exile,** at the island of Elba (April, 1814), at St. Helena (August, 1815).—[5]**a victim razed,** in a charitable view, of the opportunities and disorders of his times, certainly of his reckless ambition.—[6]**blazed,** blazoned, a classical allusion to the decking of victims brought to the sacrificial function with garlands and ribbons.

IX.

[1]**He made a name etc.** Of this truly Horatian stanza VENTURI says: "It appears to me so happy in the truth of the idea and in the vigorous and original neatness of the form, that if I am not deceived, there has not been given an equal example of lyric poetry since Horace." The Poet seems to have had in mind here the words of CARLO BOTTA spoken of Napoleon: 'He changed the destinies of humanity and held civilization and barbarism in his hand.'—[2]**Armed against each other,** in the fierce struggle of the ideas and of the doctrines of two generations, i. e., the old ideas of the Revolution and of the Reign of Terror and the new ideas which the Revolution had caused to germinate, had glorified and diffused.

X.

[1]**And disappeared.** The commentators note here the fine use of 'and' (rather than 'he' which crept into many spurious copies), bringing into contrast the closing thought of the preceding with the opening of the succeeding stanza—the terrible antithesis between a world-filling, huzzahed prominence and activity, and the silent vacuity and pilloried fame. —[2]**empty days,** in contrast with the former tirelessly busy

life.—[3]**narrow bound,** the little ocean-girt rock, 1,000 miles from nearest land, in contrast with the unlimited careering,

'From Pyramids to heights Alpine, etc.'

The commentators compare here, ARIOSTO, O. F. xli, 56 [said of Rogiero who had swum from shipwreck to a solitary island in the sea]:

" . . . . *nuovo timor gli naque*
D' aver esilio in sì strette confine
E di morirvi di disagio al fine."

[. . . . new fear came nigh
Exiled within such narrow bound to lie
And there at last of deep unrest to die].

—[4]**envy,** of emulous captains.—[5]**Pity's sympathy,** of gentle hearts the world over, moved by a sentiment of accustomed reverence and shocked by so great misfortunes.—[6]**Inextinguishable hate,** of those who had conquered, still feared and imprisoned him.—[7]**love still unsubdued,** of the unforgetting former beneficiaries, soldiers, and partners of his successes.

ELEGY PROPER.

XI.

[1]**As on etc.** The Poet now descends with a serious and almost affectionate tone, into the very soul of the fallen conqueror, examines his thoughts, discovers his distresses, and revealing all, shows him in the deepest humiliation, the most tremendous misfortune.—[2]**The wave is wrapped.** All the critics call attention to this "masterly picture" of the drowning wave of memories, first circling about him in the vortex where he is sinking and then closing down upon him with resistless weight.—[3]**strained sight.** On this simile MESTICA observes: "The last four lines of this stanza have been unjustly censured as not corresponding with the subject to which the simile refers. The correspondence is there and

so much the more effective inasmuch as the other term of the comparison is implied; that is that Napoleon had so many times strained his gaze, like the shipwrecked sailor (which is very true), over the boundless ocean in search of some liberating ship; and it is natural that after the delusion he should be overpowered by the mass of the memories of his past undertakings and greatness."

XII.

[1]**The eternal page.** The exile wished to narrate his memories on pages which, he himself painting them, were to become **eternal.**

XIII.

[1]**Without emprise.** Compare note [2] St. X.—**Sepulchral rest,** quiet as silent and unbroken as that of the grave.—[3]**his flashing eyes.** ANTONIO STOPPANI in his *First Years of Alexander Manzoni* narrates as follows: "On the 16th of June, 1800, Napoleon was conqueror at Marengo. A great part of Italy was in celebration. Milan was in a delirium of joy. There were, however, some who had no use for the bonfires. The First Consul came easily to the knowledge that the Countess Cicognara of Bologna, who was then at Milan was perhaps the most ardent of his enemies. One evening when the theatre Della Scala was honored by the attendance of the First Consul, Alexander [Manzoni], then a youth of 15 years, was in the box of the countess. Napoleon wishing, apparently, to challenge and punish the antipathy of the countess kept his eyes obstinately fixed on that box. Manzoni, cuddled close to the victim, could not take off his eyes from the eyes of the hero. 'What eyes!' said he once, speaking of it to a friend in his last years, 'What eyes that man had!'—'Then those are the eyes,' said the friend, 'which dictated to you that line.'—'Exactly so,' replied MANZONI."—[4]**assaults of souvenirs.**

This phrase has displeased among others the fierce critic TOMMASEO. "Between these two ideas," he says, "there is not a perfect proportion. 'Assaults' seems too strong with regard to 'souvenirs'; and this too weak to express the impetuous crowding together of memories in the mind of a shipwrecked castaway under the images of the past." I cannot accept this judgment. It seems to me, rather, that **souvenirs** are here conceived as an army of individual enemies who make a furious onslaught on his peace of mind — a figure beautiful in itself and suited perfectly to the military character of the subject. Moreover it is true enough, however, that **souvenir** is not a true Italian word but a much condemned gallicism; and MANZONI himself writing to CESARE CANTÙ, says: "It is an ugly word fit to make the *berretto* of father CESARE shake who counseled me to learn to write Italian. It displeased me too, but not having a *souvenir* of a better word, I let this **souvenir** stay." Compare in Byron's Ode:

> ". . . Dark spirit! what must be
> The madness of thy memory!"

XIV.

[1]**Reviewed etc.** VENTURI notes that, instead of the memories peculiar to the monarch, the statesman, the legislator, the Poet chooses those memories which refer to the life of the warrior; since in them Napoleon recognized the cause of his greatness, had them uppermost in all his thoughts and for his last words in delirium on his dying bed uttered a broken military phrase [*testa d' esercito*].—[2]**moving tents.** The exact sense intended here by the Poet of *mobili* which I have translated **moving** is not so clear and certain as could be desired. I think it is an instance of synecdoche, a part put for the whole, the picture in the Poet's mind being that of a victorious army advancing in a splendor of military display, with the great guns and baggage trains [**mov-**

ing tents] going on from first victories **[vanquished ramparts]** to new conquests.—[3]**vanquished ramparts** [*i percossi valli*]. It is known that Goethe's translation was, 'the swarming valleys' [durchwimmelte Thäler], evidently from one of the incorrect MSS. which must have read *le percorse valli*, another evidence of the currency of these changed copies, and that his translation was earlier than the first printed Italian edition. [See Introduction, page 175 note[1].

PÆAN OF IMMORTAL HOPE.

XV.

[1]**In such a strait.** With this line begins the last part of the Ode. The scenes of human greatness now pass away from the mental vision of the Exile, and his soul, yielding to the weight of his grief and ready to sink in despair, the Poet invests with a religious solace, and closes the Ode in a hymn of hope and of the victory of good —[2]**Spirit . . . . breathless . . . . inspiring air.** The critics applaud the stupendous, truly Manzonian boldness of the figure. —[3]**pitying hand,** Divine grace (*Gratia illuminans*) on his assumed resumption of the Faith.

XVI.

[1]**Flowery paths,** since hope is a flower which opens into its mature and perfect bloom only on the 'eternal plains.' —[2]**loftiest wishes far exceed.** So S. Paul, I Cor. ii, 9 (after Isaiah lxiv, 4): "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*" So Dante [Par. xix, 13]:

> . . . . *a quella gloria*
> *Che non si lascia vincere a desio.*
>
> [. . . . unto that glory
> Which cannot be exceeded by desire.]

and [Par. xxxii, 62]:

. . . . *questo regno pausa*
In tanto amore ed in tanto diletto,
Che nulla volontade è di più ausa,

. . . . "this realm reposes
In so great love and in so great delight,
That no will ventureth to ask for more."—LONGFELLOW.

—[3]**Are silence etc.,** are unheard, unseen, unthought of there. "The infinite," says DE SANCTIS, on this passage, "covers with its shadow every greatness."

XVII.

[1]**The shame of Golgotha.** That is the Cross, in the eyes of the unbelieving world. It seems strange to have to say it, but the fact stands that against this phrase many Italian critics let themselves loose from the first and MANZONI, in a letter to his friend PAGANI, defends himself saying, "it is imitated from S. Paul's '*the reproach of Christ*' [Heb. xi, 26] and '*the foolishness of the Cross.*' [1 Cor. i, 18]. The great French preachers throw out the former phrase without reserve in their discourses." Again, 17 years afterward, in a letter to the MARQUIS DE MONTGRAND, he uses the phrase "*the holy ignominy of the Cross.*"

XVIII.

[1]**Weary ashes.** Of this phrase D' OVIDIO says: "The expression seems to me in the highest rank of poetry. Napoleon at St. Helena was now the shadow of himself, and death caught him **weary** with grief and exhausted with tedium, and his corpse was like the corpse of a corpse, to whom, the Poet insinuates, we should not grudge the peace of the tomb; he was not worn out among the splendors of the throne and the merry-makings of glory; for seven years he lived in the most anguished prostration; he has undergone his penalty! This sentiment, so lofty and generous, puts

into the mysticism of the last stanza that vein of charity, of human feeling which never fails in the Manzonian religion." —[2]**thou,** beneficent Faith personified in the faithful.—[3]**who fells and lashes etc.** Vulgate, Tobias, xiii, 2: "*tu flagellas et salvas, deducis ad inferos, et reducis*" [thou scourgest, and thou savest, thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again. (Douay Trans.)].—[4]**lonely dying bed.** On this L. VENTURI observes: "It does not seem that it can absolutely be called so, for we know that around the dying Napoleon stood the priest Vignali, the physician Antonmarchi, the generals Bertram and Montholon, the families of these two and many other followers dear to the Emperor. But perhaps it does not go far from the truth to think that in the word **lonely** [deserta] our author wished to adumbrate the idea of the lack of wife and child and every other one of his kindred; the deprivation of whom cannot be so compensated by the assisting cares of friendship, that his bed in the eyes of a dying husband and father must not seem solitary and abandoned." But I think also were not absent from MANZONI'S thought the lack of crowding courtiers and the swarm of gaping thousands.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE PREFACES, INTRODUCTIONS, NOTES, ETC.

BERTOLDI	ALFONSO BERTOLDI; *Poesie Liriche di Alessandro Manzoni*, Firenze, 1892.
BLUNT	JOHN HENRY BLUNT; *The Annotated Book of Common Prayer*, London, 1876.
BONGHI	RUGIERO BONGHI; *Opere inedite e rare di Alessandro Manzoni*, Milano, 1883.
CAMERINI	EUGENIO CAMERINI; *Introduzione alle Tragedie e Poesie di Alessandro Manzoni*, Milano, Sonzogno, 1879.
CANTÙ	CESARE CANTÙ; *Alessandro Manzoni, Reminiscenze.*
CÁRCANO	GIULIO CÁRCANO; *Vita d' Alessandro Manzoni premessa all' edizione postuma degli Promessi Sposi*, Milano, Rechiedei, 1883.
D'ANCONA	A. D'ANCONA E O. BACCI; *Manuale della Letteratura Italiana*, Firenze, 1900.
DE GUBERNATIS	ANGELO DE GUBERNATIS; *Alessandro Manzoni, Studio Biografico*, Firenze 1879.

ABBREVIATIONS.

D' OVIDIO	FRANCESCO D' OVIDIO; *Discussioni Manzonione*, Città di Castillo, 1886.
DE SANCTIS	FRANCESCO DE SANCTIS; *Nuovi Saggi Critici*, Napoli, 1879.
FERRARI	VITTORIO FERRARI; *Letteratura Italiana, Moderna e Contemporanea* (1748–1903), Milano, 1904.
FINZI	GIUSEPPE FINZI; *Lezioni di Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, Torino, 1891.
MESTICA	GIOVANNI MESTICA; *Manuale della Letteratura Italiana nel secolo XIX*, Firenze, 1889. Volume II, Parte I.
PRINA	BENEDETTO PRINA; *Alessandro Manzoni*, Milano, 1874.
SAINTE BEUVE	C. A. SAINTE-BEUVE; *Fauriel e Manzoni*, **Traduzione** *di* G. Z.-J. Firenze, 1895.
STOPPANI	ANTONIO STOPPANI; *I Primi Anni di Alessandro Manzoni;* **Spigolature,** Milano, 1874.
TOMMASEO	NICOLÒ TOMMASEO; *Ispirazione e Arte etc.*, Firenze, 1858.
VENTURI	LUIGI VENTURI; *Gl' Inni Sacri e Il Cinque Maggio di Alessandro Manzoni*, Firenze, 1901.

APPENDIX B

GL' INNI SACRI and IL CINQUE MAGGIO

IN THE TEXT OF THE AUTHOR'S EDITION OF 1840.

I.

IL NATALE

Qual masso che dal vertice
Di lunga erta montana,
Abbandonato all'impeto
Di rumorosa frana,
Per lo scheggiato calle
Precipitando a valle,
Batte sul fondo e sta;

Là dove cadde, immobile
Giace in sua lenta mole;
Nè per mutar di secoli,
Fia che riveda il sole
Della sua cima antica,
Se una virtude amica
In alto nol tarrà:

Tal si giaceva il misero
Figliuol del fallo primo,
Dal dì che un'ineffabile
Ira promessa all'imo
D'ogni malor gravollo,
Donde il superbo collo
Più non potea levar.

Qual mai fra i nati all'odio,
Qual era mai persona
Che al Santo inaccessibile
Potesse dir: perdona?
Far novo patto eterno?
Al vincitore inferno
La Preda sua strappar?

Ecco ci è nato un Pargolo,
Ci fu largito un Figlio:
Le avverse forze tremano
Al mover del suo ciglio:
All'uom la mano Ei porge,
Che si ravviva, e sorge
Oltre l'antico onor.

Dalle magioni eteree
Sgorga una fonte, e scende;
E nel borron de'triboli
Vivida si distende:
Stillano mele i tronchi;
Dove copriano i bronchi,
Ivi germoglia il fior.

O Figlio, o Tu, cui genera
L'Eterno, eterno seco;
Qual ti può dir de' secoli:
Tu cominciasti meco?
Tu sei: del vasto empiro
Non ti comprende il giro:
La tua parola il fe'.

E Tu degnasti assumere
Questa creata argilla?
Qual merto suo, qual grazia
A tanto onor sortilla?
Se in suo consiglio ascoso
Vince il perdon, pietoso
Immensamente Egli è.

IL NATALE.

Oggi Egli è nato: ad Efrata,
Vaticinato ostello,
Ascese un'alma Vergine,
La gloria d'Israello,
Grave di tal portato:
Da cui promise è nato,
Donde era atteso uscì.

La mira Madre in poveri
Panni il Figliol compose,
E nell'umil presepio
Soavemente il pose;
E l'adorò: beata!
Innanzi al Dio prostrata,
Che il puro sen le aprì.

L'Angel del cielo, agli uomini
Nunzio di tanta sorte,
Non de' potenti volgesi
Alle vegliate porte;
Ma tra i pastor devoti,
Al duro mondo ignoti,
Subito in luce appar.

E intorno a Lui per l'ampia
Notte calati a stuolo,
Mille celesti strinsero
Il fiammeggiante volo;
E accesi in dolce zelo,
Come si canta in cielo,
A Dio gloria cantâr.

L'Allegro inno seguirono,
Tornando al firmamento:
Tra le varcate nuvole
Allontanossi, e lento
Il suon sacrato ascese,
Fin che più nulla intese
La compagnia fedel.

Senza indugiar, cercarono
L'albergo poveretto
Que' fortunati, e videro,
Siccome a lor fu detto,
Videro in panni avvolto,
In un presepe accolto,
Vagire il Re del Ciel.

Dormi, o Fanciul; non piangere;
Dormi, o Fanciul celeste;
Sovra il tuo capo stridere
Non osin le tempeste,
Use su l'empia terra,
Come cavalli in guerra
Correr davanti a Te.

Dormi, o Celeste: i popoli
Chi nato sia non sanno;
Ma il dì verrà che nobile
Retaggio tuo saranno;
Che in quell'umil riposo,
Che nella polve ascoso,
Conosceranno il Re.

II.

LA PASSIONE

O tementi dell'ira ventura,
Cheti e gravi oggi al tempio moviamo,
Come gente che pensi a sventura,
Che improvviso s'intese annunziar.
Non s'aspetti di squilla il richiamo;
Nol concede il mestissimo rito:
Qual di donna che piange il marito,
È la veste del vedovo altar.

Cessan gl'inni e i misteri beati,
Tra cui scende, per mistica via,
Sotto l'ombra de' pani mutati,
L'ostia viva di pace e d'amor.
S'ode une carme: l'intento Isaia
Proferì questo sacro lamento,
In quel dì che un divino spavento
Gli affannava il fatidico cor.

LA PASSIONE.

Di chi parli, o Veggente di Giuda?
Chi è costui che, davanti all'Eterno,
Spunterà come tallo da nuda
Terra, lunge da fonte vital?
Questo fiacco pasciuto di scherno,
Che la faccia si copre d'un velo,
Come fosse un percosso dal cielo,
Il novissimo d'ogni mortal?

Egli è il Giusto che i vili han trafitto,
Ma tacente, ma senza tenzone;
Egli è il Giusto; e di tutti il delitto
Il Signor sul suo capo versò.
Egli è il santo, il predetto Sansone,
Che morendo francheggia Israele;
Che volente alla sposa infedele
La fortissima chioma lasciò.

Quei che siede sui cerchi divini,
E d'Adamo si fece figliolo;
Nè sdegnò coi fratelli tapini
Il funesto retaggio partir:
Volle l'onte, e nell'anima il duolo,
E l' angosce di morte sentire,
E il terror che seconda il fallire,
Ei che mai non conobbe il fallir.

La repulsa al suo prego sommesso,
L'abbandono del Padre sostenne:
Oh spavento! l'orribile amplesso
D'un amico spergiuro soffrì.
Ma simile quell'alma divenne
Alla notte dell'uomo omicida:
Di quel Sangue sol ode le grida,
E s'accorge che Sangue tradì.

Oh spavento! lo stuol de' beffardi
Baldo insulta a quel volto divino,
Ove intender non osan gli sguardi
Gl'incolpabili figli del ciel.
Come l'ebbro desidera il vino,
Nell'offese quell'odio s'irrita;
E al maggior dei delitti gl'incita
Del delitto la gioia crudel.

Ma chi fosse quel tacito reo,
Che davanti al suo seggio profano
Strascinava il protervo Giudeo,
Come vittima innanzi all'altar,
Non lo seppe il superbo Romano;
Ma fe' stima il deliro potente,
Che giovasse col sangue innocente
La sua vil sicurtade comprar.

Su nel cielo in sua doglia raccolto
Giunse il suono d'un prego esecrato:
I Celesti copersero il volto:
Disse Iddio: Qual chiedete sarà.
E quel Sangue dai padri imprecato
Sulla misera prole ancor cade,
Che mutata d'etade in etade,
Scossa ancor dal suo capo non l'ha.

Ecco appena sul letto nefando
Quell'Afflitto depose la fronte,
E un altissimo grido levando,
Il supremo sospiro mandò:
Gli uccisori esultanti sul monte
Di Dio l'ira già grande minaccia;
Già dall'ardue vedette s'affaccia,
Quasi accenni: Tra poco verrò.

Oh gran Padre! per Lui che s'immola,
Cessi alfine quell'ira tremenda;
E de' ciechi l'insana parola
Volgi in meglio, pietoso Signor.
Sì, quel Sangue sovr'essi discenda;
Ma sia pioggia di mite lavacro:
Tutti errammo; di tutti quel sacro-
Santo Sangue cancelli l'error.

E tu, Madre, che immota vedesti
Un tal Figlio morir su la croce,
Per noi prega, o regina de' mesti,
Che il possiamo in sua gloria veder;
Che i dolori, onde il secolo atroce
Fa de' boni più tristo l'esiglio,
Misti al santo patir del tuo Figlio,
Ci sian pegno d'eterno goder.

III.

LA RESURRECTIONE

È risorto: or come a morte
La sua preda fu ritolta?
Come ha vinte l'atre porte,
Come è salvo un'altra volta
Quei che giacque in forza altrui?
Io lo giuro per Colui
Che da' morti il suscitò.

È risorto: il capo santo
Più non posa nel sudario;
È risorto: dall'un canto
Dell'avello solitario
Sta il coperchio rovesciato:
Come un forte inebbriato
Il Signor si risvegliò.

Come a mezzo del cammino,
Riposato alla foresta,
Si risente il pellegrino,
E si scote dalla testa
Una foglia inaridita,
Che dal ramo dipartita,
Lenta lenta vi ristè:

Tale il marmo inoperoso,
Che premea l'arca scavata,
Gittò via quel Vigoroso,
Quando l'anima tornata
Dalla squallida vallea,
Al Divino che tacea:
Sorgi, disse, io son con Te.

Che parola si diffuse
Tra i sopiti d'Israele!
Il Signor le porte ha schiuse!
Il Signor, l'Emmanuele!
O sopiti in aspettando,
È finito il vostro bando:
Egli è desso, il Redentor.

Pria di Lui nel regno eterno
Che mortal sarebbe asceso?
A rapirvi al muto inferno,
Vecchi padri, Egli è disceso:
Il sospir del tempo antico,
Il terror dell'inimico,
Il promesso Vincitor.

Ai mirabili Veggenti,
Che narrarono il futuro,
Come il padre ai figli intenti
Narra i casi che già furo,
Si mostrò quel sommo Sole
Che, parlando in lor parole,
Alla terra Iddio giurò;

Quando Aggeo, quando Isaia
Mallevaro al mondo intero
Che il Bramato un dì verria;
Quando, assorto in suo pensiero,
Lesse i giorni numerati,
E degli anni ancor non nati
Daniel si ricordò.

Era l'alba; e molli il viso,
Maddalena e l'altre donne
Fean lamento in sull'Ucciso
Ecco tutta di Sionne
Si commosse la pendice,
E la scolta insultatrice
Di spavento tramortì.

Un estranio giovinetto
Si posò sul monumento:
Era folgore l'aspetto,
Era neve il vestimento:
Alla mesta che 'l richiese
Diè riposta quel cortese:
È risorto; non è qui.

Via co' palii disadorni
Lo squallor della viola:
L'oro usato a splendor torni:
Sacerdote, in bianca stola,
Esci ai grandi ministeri,
Tra la luce de' doppieri,
Il Risorto ad annunziar.

Dall'altar si mosse un grido:
Godi, o Donna alma del cielo;
Godi; il Dio cui fosti nido
A vestirsi il nostro velo,
È risorto, come il disse:
Per noi prega: Egli prescrisse,
Che sia legge il tuo pregar.

O fratelli, il santo rito
Sol di gaudio oggi ragiona;
Oggi è giorno di convito;
Oggi esulta ogni persona:
Non è madre che sia schiva
Della spoglia più festiva
I suoi bamboli vestir.

Sia frugal del ricco il pasto;
Ogni mensa abbia i suoi doni;
E il tesor negato al fasto
Di superbe imbandigioni
Scorra amico all'umil tetto,
Faccia il desco poveretto
Più ridente oggi apparir.

Lunge il grido e la tempesta
De' tripudi inverecondi:
L'allegrezza non è questa
Di che i giusti son giocondi;
Ma pacata in suo contegno,
Ma celeste, come segno
Della gioia che verrà.

O beati! a lor più bello
Spunta il sol de' giorni santi;
Ma che fia di chi rubello
Torse, ahi stolto! i passi erranti
Nel sentier che a morte guida?
Nel Signor chi si confida
Col Signor risorgerà.

IV.

LA PENTECOSTE

Madre dei Santi; immagine
Della città superna;
Del Sangue incorruttibile
Conservatrice eterna;
Tu che, da tanti secoli,
Soffri, combatti e preghi;
Che le tue tende spieghi
Dall' uno all' altro mar;

Campo di quei che sperano;
Chiesa del Dio vivente;
Dov' eri mai? qual angolo
Ti raccogliea nascente,
Quando il tuo Re, dai perfidi
Tratto a morir sul colle,
Imporporò le zolle
Del suo sublime altar?

E allor che dalle tenebre
La diva spoglia uscita,
Mise il potente anelito
Della seconda vita;
E quando, in man recandosi
Il prezzo del perdono,
Da questa polve al trono
Del Genitor salì;

Compagna del suo gemito,
Conscia de' suoi misteri,
Tu, della sua vittoria
Figlia immortal, dov' eri?
In tuo terror sol vigile,
Sol nell' obblio secura,
Stavi in riposte mura,
Fino a quel sacro dì,

LA PENTECOSTE.

Quando su te lo Spirito
Rinnovator discese,
E l' inconsunta fiaccola
Nella tua destra accese;
Quando, segnal de' popoli,
Ti collocò sul monte,
E ne' tuoi labbri il fonte
Della parola aprì.

Come la luce rapida
Piove di cosa in cosa,
E i color vari suscita
Dovunque si riposa;
Tal risonò moltiplici
La voce dello Spiro:
L' Arabo, il Parto, il Siro
In suo sermon l' udì.

Adorator degl' idoli,
Sparso per ogni lido,
Volgi lo sguardo a Solima,
Odi quel santo grido:
Stanca del vile ossequio,
La terra a LUI ritorni:
E voi che aprite i giorni
Di più felice età,

Spose che desta il subito
Balzar del pondo ascoso;
Voi già vicine a sciogliere
Il grembo doloroso;
Alla bugiarda pronuba
Non sollevate il canto:
Cresce serbato al Santo
Quel che nel sen vi sta.

Perchè, baciando i pargoli,
La schiava ancor sospira?
E il sen che nutre i liberi
Invidiando mira?
Non sa che al regno i miseri
Seco il Signor solleva?
Che a tutti i figli d'Eva
Nel suo dolor pensò?

Nova franchigia annunziano
I cieli, e genti nove;
Nove conquiste, e gloria
Vinta in più belle prove;
Nova, ai terrori immobile
E alle lusinghe infide,
Pace, che il mondo irride,
Ma che rapir non può.

O Spirto! supplichevoli
A' tuoi solenni altari;
Soli per selve inospite;
Vaghi in deserti mari;
Dall' Ande algenti al Libano,
D' Erina all' irta Haiti,
Sparsi per tutti i liti,
Uni per Te di Cor,

Noi T' imploriam! Placabile
Spirto discendi ancora,
A' tuoi cultor propizio,
Propizio a chi T' ignora:
Scendi e ricrea; rianima
I cor nel dubbio estinti;
E sia divina ai vinti
Mercede il vincitor.

Discendi Amor; negli animi
L' ire superbe attuta:
Dona i pensier che il memore
Ultimo dì non muta:
I doni tuoi benefica
Nutra la tua virtude;
Siccome il sol che schiude
Dal pigro germe il fior;

Che lento poi sull' umili
Erbe morrà non colto,
Nè sorgerà coi fulgidi
Color del lembo sciolto,
Se fuso a lui nell' etere
Non tornerà quel mite
Lume, dator di vite,
E infaticato altor.

LA PENTECOSTE.

Noi T' imploriam! Ne' languidi
Pensier dell' infelice
Scendi piacevol alito,
Aura consolatrice:
Scendi bufera ai tumidi
Pensier del violento;
Vi spira uno sgomento,
Che insegni la pietà.

Per Te sollevi il povero
Al ciel, ch' è suo, le ciglia,
Volga i lamenti in giubilo,
Pensando a cui somiglia:
Cui fu donato in copia,
Doni con volto amico,
Con quel tacer pudico,
Che accetto il don ti fa.

Spira de' nostri bamboli
Nell' ineffabil riso;
Spargi la casta porpora
Alle donzelle in viso;
Manda alle ascose vergini
Le pure gioie ascose;
Consacra delle spose
Il verecondo amor.

Tempra de' baldi giovani
Il confidente ingegno;
Reggi il viril proposito
Ad infallibil segno;
Adorna la canizie
Di liete voglie sante;
Brilla nel guardo errante
Di chi sperando muor.

V.

IL NOME DI MARIA

Tacita un giorno a non so qual pendice
Salìa d'un fabbro nazaren la sposa;
Salìa non vista alla magion felice
D'una pregnante annosa;

E detto salve a lei, che in reverenti
Accoglienze onorò l'inaspettata,
Dio lodando, sclamò: Tutte le genti
Mi chiameran beata.

Deh! con che scherno udito avria i lontani
Presagi allor l'età superba! Oh tardo
Nostro consiglio! oh degl'intenti umani
Antiveder bugiardo!

Noi testimoni che alla tua parola
Obbediente l'avvenir rispose,
Noi serbati all'amor, nati alla scola
Delle celesti cose,

Noi sappiamo, o Maria, ch'Ei solo attenne
L'alta promessa che da Te s'udia,
Ei che in cor la ti pose: a noi solenne
È il nome tuo, Maria.

A noi Madre di Dio quel nome sona:
Salve beata: che s'agguagli ad esso
Qual fu mai nome di mortal persona,
O che gli vegna appresso?

Salve beata: in quale età scortese
Quel sì caro a ridir nome si tacque?
In qual dal padre il figlio non l'apprese?
Quai monti mai, quali acque

Non l'udiro invocar? La terra antica
Non porta sola i templi tuoi, ma quella
Che il Genovese divinò, nutrica
I tuoi cultori anch'ella.

IL NOME DI MARIA.

In che lande selvagge, oltre quai mari
Di sì barbaro nome fior si coglie,
Che non conosca de' tuoi miti altari
Le benedette soglie?

O Vergine, o Signora, o Tuttasanta,
Che bei nomi ti serba ogni loquela!
Più d'un popol superbo esser si vanta
In tua gentil tutela.

Te, quando sorge, e quando cade il die,
E quado il sole a mezzo corso il parte,
Saluta il bronzo che le turbe pie
Invita ad onorarte.

Nelle paure della veglia bruna,
Te noma il fanciulletto; a Te, tremante,
Quando ingrossa ruggendo la fortuna,
Ricorre il navigante.

La femminetta nel tuo sen regale
La sua spregiata lacrima depone,
E a Te beata, della sua immortale
Alma gli affanni espone;

A Te che i preghi ascolti e le querele,
Non come suole il mondo, nè degl'imi
E de' grandi il dolor col suo crudele
Discernimento estimi.

Tu pur, beata, un dì provasti il pianto:
Nè il dì verrà che d'obblianza il copra:
Anco ogni giorno se ne parla; e tanto
Secol vi corse sopra.

Anco ogni giorno se ne parla e plora
In mille parti; d'ogni tuo contento
Teco la terra si rallegra ancora,
Come di fresco evento.

Tanto d'ogni laudato esser la prima
Di Dio la Madre ancor quaggiù dovea;
Tanto piacque al Signor di porre in cima
Questa fanciulla ebrea.

O prole d'Israello, o nell'estremo
Caduta, o da sì lunga ira contrita,
Non è costei che in onor tanto avemo,
Di vostra fede uscita?

Non è Davidde il ceppo suo? con Lei
Era il pensier de' vostri antiqui Vati,
Quando annunziaro i verginal trofei
Sopra l'inferno alzati.

Deh! a Lei volgete finalmente i preghi,
Ch'Ella vi salvi, Ella che salva i suoi;
E non sia gente nè tribù che neghi
Lieta cantar con noi:

Salve, o degnata del secondo nome,
O Rosa, o Stella ai periglianti scampo,
Inclita come il sol, terribil come
Oste schierata in campo.

IL CINQUE MAGGIO

Ei fu. Siccome immobile,
Dato il mortal sospiro,
Stette la spoglia immemore
Orba di tanto spiro,
Così percossa, attonita
La terra al nunzio sta,

Muta pensando all'ultima
Ora dell'uom fatale;
Nè sa quando uno simile
Orma di piè mortale
La sua cruenta polvere
A calpestar verrà.

IL CINQUE MAGGIO.

Lui folgorante in solio
Vide il mio genio e tacque;
Quando, con vece assidua,
Cadde, risorse e giacque,
Di mille voci al sonito
Mista la sua non ha:

Vergin di servo ecomio
E di codardo oltraggio,
Sorge or commosso al subito
Sparir di tanto raggio;
E scioglie all'urna un cantico
Che forse non morrà.

Dall'Alpi alle Piramidi,
Dal Manzanarre al Reno,
Di quel securo il fulmine
Tenea dietro al baleno;
Scoppiò da Scilla al Tanai,
Dall'uno all'altro mar.

Fu vera gloria? Ai posteri
L'ardua sentenza: nui
Chiniam la fronte al Massimo
Fattor, che volle in lui
Del creator suo spirito
Più vasta orma stampar.

La procellosa e trepida
Gioia d'un gran disegno,
L'ansia d'un cor che indocile
Serve, pensando al regno;
E il giunge, e tiene un premio
Ch'era follia sperar;

Tutto ei provò: la gloria
Maggior dopo il periglio,
La fuga e la vittoria,
La reggia e il tristo esiglio:
Du volte nella polvere,
Due volte sull'altar.

Ei si nomò: due secoli,
L'un contro l'altro armato,
Sommessi a lui si volsero,
Come aspettando il fato;
Ei fe' silenzio, ed arbitro
S'assise in mezzo a lor.

E sparve, e i dì nell'ozio
Chiuse in sì breve sponda,
Segno d'immensa invidia
E di pietà profonda,
D'inestinguibil odio
E d'indomato amor.

Come sul capo al naufrago
L'onda s'avvolve e pesa,
L'onda, su cui del misero,
Alta pur dianzi e tesa,
Scorrea la vista a scernere
Prode remote invan;

Tal su quell'alma il cumulo
Delle memorie scese!
Oh quante volte ai posteri
Narrar sè stesso imprese,
E sull'eterne pagine
Cadde la stanca man!

Oh! quante volte, al tacito
Morir d'un giorno inerte,
Chinati i rai fulminei,
Le braccia al sen conserte,
Stette, e dei dì che furono
L'assalse il sovvenir!

E ripensò le mobili
Tende, e i percossi valli,
E il lampo de' manipoli,
E' l'onda dei cavalli,
E il concitato imperio,
E il celere ubbidir.

IL CINQUE MAGGIO.

Ahi! forse a tanto strazio
Cadde lo spirto anelo,
E disperò; ma valida
Venne una man dal cielo,
E in più spirabil aere
Pietosa il trasportò;

E 'l avviò, pei floridi
Sentier della speranza,
Ai campi eterni, al premio
Che i desidéri avanza,
Dov'é silenzio e tenebre
La gloria che passò.

Bella Immortal! benefica
Fede ai trionfi avvezza!
Scrivi ancor questo, allegrati;
Chè più superba altezza
Al disonor del Golgota
Giammai non si chinò.

Tu dalle stanche ceneri
Sperdi ogni ria parola:
Il Dio che atterra e suscita,
Che affanna e che consola,
Sulla deserta coltrice
Accanto a lui posò.